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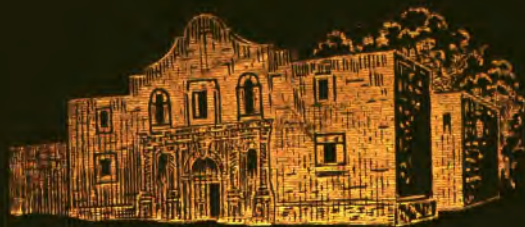
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In the Shadow *of* the Alamo







By

Author of "The Girl of La Gloria," etc.

Illustrated by Florence Eagar



NEW YORK & LONDON

The Knickerbocker Press

1906



IN THE SHADOW OF THE ALAMO

By

Clara Driscoll

Author of "The Girl of La Gloria," etc.

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The Knickerbocker Press
1906

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**THE CUSTODIAN OF THE
ALAMO**

THE CUSTODIAN OF THE ALAMO

I

The Past

MORE than two hundred years ago Spanish missionaries built a chain of fortress-churches stretching from the Sabine to the Rio Grande. To-day these churches are ruins.

Out of the chaos of crumbling stone, rusting iron, fading colors, and defaced carvings stands one picturesque edifice, grim, sinister, silent, marked by the scars of battle and stained with the blood of brave souls who fought and died in its defence. It is the shrine of Texas independence and glory, the most conspicuous monument left to the memory

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of her brave and heroic sons. Though situated in the business centre of that quaint old Spanish-American city of San



Antonio, it stands apart and aloof, wrapped in its own solitude.

This crumbling ruin is the chapel of the Mission of San Antonio de Valero, named the Alamo—the Spanish for cottonwood—from the trees along the river bank and *acequia*. First established on the Rio Grande in 1700, the Mission was removed to San Antonio in 1718, and to the spot on which it now stands in 1744.

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The fall of the Alamo occurred March 6, 1836.

To understand and appreciate the story of the Alamo, and the devotion of that little band of brave men who died there, one must know the conditions existing between Mexico and Texas at that time.

The American settlers, mostly from Tennessee, Connecticut, Mississippi, and Kentucky, who had come to Texas with the fair promises of the Mexicans ringing in their ears, soon learned on what false and empty words they had relied. The protection which they had counted upon, and which they had reason to expect, was denied them by their swarthy-skinned neighbors.

When Santa Anna, the President of Mexico, fearing the independent spirit of the Texans and foreseeing probable difficulty with them, issued an order that all

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arms should be surrendered by the Texans, these indomitable pioneers arose in indignation and absolutely refused to



obey. Then followed the fight at Gonzales for the possession of a brass cannon held by the Texans, with the result that the Mexican troops were scattered.

Just before the skirmish the Rev. W. P. Smith, a man much admired and loved by the pioneers for his courage and goodness, addressed his fellow-defenders of Texas liberty with the following spirited words:

"Mexico has now sent an army to commence the disarming system. Give up this cannon and we may surrender our small arms also, and at once be the vassals of the most unstable and most imbecile

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government upon earth. Will Texas give up her arms? Every response is No, NEVER! Never will she submit to such degradation. Fellow-soldiers, the cause for which we are contending is just, honorable, glorious—our liberty.

“The same blood that animated the hearts of our ancestors in 1776 still flows warm in our veins. Let us present a bold front to the enemy. In numerical strength the nation against which we contend is our superior, but so just and holy is the cause for which we contend that the strong arm of Jehovah will lead us on to victory, to glory, and to empire. With us, everything is at stake—our firesides, our wives, our children, and our country

“We must conquer.”

The Texans were now fully awakened to the gravity of the situation. Sam Houston, the man who afterwards became President of the Republic of Texas,

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was made commander of the forces to be raised in the eastern part of the State. His first address shows of what sterling, fearless qualities these fathers of an empire State were composed.

It reads as follows:

“The time has arrived when the revolutions in the interior of Mexico have resulted in the creation of a dictator, and Texas is compelled to assume an attitude defensive of her rights and the lives and property of her citizens. War is our only alternative. ‘War in defence of our rights’ must be our motto. The morning of glory has dawned upon us. The work of liberty has begun. Our actions are to be-



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come a part of the history of mankind. Patriot millions will sympathize with our struggles, while nations will admire our achievements.

“Rally around the standard of the constitution, entrench your rights with manly resolution, and defend them with heroic firmness. Let your valor proclaim to the world that liberty is your birth-right. We cannot be conquered by all the arts of anarchy and despotism combined. In Heaven and valorous hearts we repose our confidence.”

When there went forth proclamations with words as patriotic as these, it is no wonder that the alien sons of Texas gained the glorious independence they sought for the State of their adoption. Following closely on the fight at Gonzales was the capture of Goliad by the Texans, and the battle of Conception, also a decided victory for the cause of liberty.

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A general consultation at San Felipe was held and Sam Houston was made commander-in-chief of the army of Texas. Then came the capture of San Antonio, and Santa Anna, enraged at the defeat of the army under General Cos, determined to subdue at all costs the successful Texans.



The conditions of the surrender of General Cos manifested a spirit of fairness, even generosity, on the part of the patriots.

"1. Cos and his army were allowed to depart with their arms and private property on the promise that they would never oppose the return of Mexico to a purely republican form of government, nor take up arms against Texas.

"2. All convict soldiers were to be taken entirely out of Texas.

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“3. Those Mexican troops who wished to leave the army, or remain in San Antonio, were to be permitted to do so.

“4. All public property was to belong to the victors.”

Quite an opposite spirit was shown in the plans made public by Santa Anna for conquering Texas:

“1. All who had taken part in the rebellion were to be driven from the province.

“2. All who were not rebels were to be removed far into the interior.

“3. The best lands were to be given to the Mexican officers and soldiers.

“4. No one from the United States was to be allowed to settle in the province under any circumstances. The Texans were to pay all the expenses of the war. Every foreigner who should bring arms or military stores into Texas was to be considered and treated as a pirate.”

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On February 23, 1836, General Santa Anna came into San Antonio at the head of his army of four thousand men. Inside the Alamo, or Mission of San Valero, were gathered one hundred and forty-five Texans, ready to give up their lives rather than surrender to the Mexican despot.



Commanding this gallant little band was Colonel William Barret Travis, and with him were "Davy" Crockett, Bowie, and Bonham. To many the name of Bowie suggests only a certain kind of desirable knife, whereas it should thrill them with the example of a man who died for the rights and the flag of his country. Davy Crockett and his 'coon song bring laughter to the lips of the unknowing, but those who realize the

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sacrifice of his life for his principles think of him with wet lashes.

Travis, the youthful commander of the fort, lies under the sod for whose glory he fought, unheralded and unsung. Let us scan the lists of the mighty dead and where can we find names that stand ahead of these? So long as there are people to venerate immortal glory, these names will live with the great hero-martyrs of history, for no man can do more than give up his life for liberty and his country.

The story of the sacrifice can never be told too often. Upon Santa Anna's demand for the immediate surrender of the little garrison defending the Alamo, the mouth of a cannon sent back the answer, and, almost before its ominous echoes had died away, a blood-red flag was hoisted from the tower of San Fernando Cathedral, Santa Anna's headquarters. Its meaning was "No quarter."

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Stubbornly, in the face of its red folds, the Texans fought for ten days and nights, watching always, and not without hope that reinforcements would come. On the third of March, Colonel Travis sent out an appeal to the convention in session at Washington on the Brazos, and it was the last favor that these brave souls who faced death so unflinchingly ever asked of man. In this appeal Travis said that "the blood-red banners which waved over the church at Bexar, and in the camp above him, were tokens that the war was one of vengeance against rebels."

At the same time he wrote to a friend in Washington County:

"Take care of my little boy. If the country should be saved I may make him a splendid fortune, but if the country should be lost, and I should perish, he will have nothing but the proud recollec-

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tion that he is the son of a man who died for his country."

The only relief that came in response was a force of thirty-two men from Gonzales, brought back by Captain John W. Smith. They managed to evade the vigilance of the Mexican besiegers and entered the fort in safety, but to their ultimate destruction. While the men inside the beleaguered fort now numbered less than two hundred, Santa Anna's army had increased to six thousand—a mighty host against a handful.

The end was drawing near. On the sixth of March a death-like stillness fell over the little town. The roar of cannon was hushed, and Travis understood. He called his little force together and spoke to them:

"MY COMRADES: Stern necessity compels me to improve these few moments, while the enemy has ceased bombarding

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and withdrawn to an unusual distance. We are overwhelmed and our fate is sealed. Within a few days, perhaps within a few hours, we must be in eternity. I have continually received the promise of help, and have long deceived you by extending you this hope, from the fulness of my heart instilling you with courage and bravery, as it has been extended me by the council at home.

“But they have evidently not been informed of our perilous condition, or ere this would have come to our assistance. My last call on Colonel Fannin remains unanswered and my messengers have not returned. The probabilities are that his command has fallen into the hands of the enemy, or that our couriers have been cut off and have not reached him.

“It is no longer a question of how we may save our own lives, but how best to prepare for death and serve our country.

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If we surrender we will be shot without taking the life of a single enemy. If we try to make our escape through the Mexican lines we will be butchered before we can despatch our adversaries. To either of these I am opposed and ask you to withstand every advance of the enemy. And when they shall scale our walls at last and storm the fort, let us slay them as they come, as they leap within slay them, as they raise their weapons to slay our companions, slay we all of them, until our arms are powerless to lift our swords in defence of ourselves, our comrades, and our country.

“Yet to every man I give permission to surrender or escape. My desire and decision is to remain in the fort and fight as long as breath remains in my body. But do as you think best, each of you, and those who consent to remain until the end will give me joy unspeakable.”

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Travis then drew his sword and traced from right to left of the file a line. Standing in front of the centre he said:

“I now want every man who is determined to stay here and die with me to come across that line. Who will be the first? March!”

The first to respond was Tapley Holland, who leaped the line at a bound, exclaiming:

“I am ready to die for my country! ”

His example was instantly followed by every man in the file, except one. His name was Rose. Every sick man who could walk arose and tottered across the line.

Colonel Bowie, who could not leave his bed, said: “Boys, I am not able to come to you, but I wish that some of you would be so kind as to move my cot over there.” Four men instantly ran to the cot and lifted it over the line. Then every sick

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man that could not walk made the same request, and had his bunk moved in the same way.

Colonel Fannin had started from Goliad with three hundred men and four pieces of artillery to help the men in the Alamo, but owing to sickness of his troops, want of food, and lack of teams, he was forced to turn back.

As in the Revolution, there was but one traitor in the Alamo. There was but one who refused to sacrifice his life. He waited on the outskirts of the town and listened to the bombardment of the fort until the following morning at sunrise, when it ceased entirely. The awful silence that followed the cannonading told that the Alamo had fallen. Since the first faint streak of dawn had tinged the eastern horizon, the comrades Rose had deserted were dauntlessly meeting their deaths.

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Before nine o'clock the last gallant defender of the Alamo had gone to his reward, and as these men had fought, so they died, with the word "liberty" on their stiffening lips.

A Mexican sergeant named Becerra, thus graphically pictures that end:

"There was an order to gather our own dead and wounded. It was a fearful sight. Our lifeless soldiers covered the ground surrounding the Alamo. They were heaped inside the fortress. Blood and brains covered the earth and the floors and had spattered the walls. The ghastly faces of our comrades met our gaze, and we removed them with despondent hearts. Our loss in front of the Alamo was represented at two thousand killed and more than three hundred wounded. The killed were generally struck on the head; the wounds were on the neck or shoulder, seldom below that.

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“The firing of the besieged was fearfully precise. When a Texas rifle was levelled on a Mexican he was considered as good as dead. All this indicated the dauntless bravery and cool self-possession of the men who were engaged in a hopeless conflict with an enemy numbering more than twenty to one.

They inflicted on us a loss ten times greater than they sustained. The victory of the Alamo was dearly bought. Indeed, the price in the end was well-nigh the ruin of Mexico.”



Santa Anna, the President of Mexico had won a victory, but the final result of this victory was defeat for Mexico, and left the “Lone Star of Texas” floating proudly over an independent nation.

By order of Santa Anna a large

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pile of wood was collected. The bodies of the vanquished martyrs were heaped upon this pile and burned. The flames kindled by the bodies illumined the heavens and vast stretches of prairie land, curling blood-red up towards the blue of the Texas sky—a prophetic warning of coming conquests.

It was not in the records of justice that men like the defenders of the Alamo should meet such a death without vengeance following. And such vengeance was speedy and complete. It came on the battle-field of San Jacinto, where the troops of Santa Anna went down forever before the fury of the Texans, and the dictator himself was captured while trying to make his escape in the disguise of a common soldier. His fine linen shirt and jewelled studs betrayed his identity to the men who captured him—not, however, as Santa Anna, but as some officer

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of high rank—and he was brought before Houston, who lay wounded under a tree.

Though not generally recorded in history, the writer knows, from information obtained from the sons of men who fought at San Jacinto, that the only thing that saved the life of the Mexican general was the fact that he was a Mason, as was General Houston. The night following Santa Anna's capture, a guard, composed entirely of members of the Masonic fraternity, was placed over him, and when a party of Texans surrounded the tent and demanded that the prisoner be delivered to them, that they might deal with him in a way which they thought he justly deserved, they were repulsed at the point of bayonets.

Some twenty years ago the State of Texas bought the chapel of the Alamo from the Catholic Church, paying for it

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twenty thousand dollars. During the years following, the name Alamo had become almost meaningless. Recently a noble body of women, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, succeeded in inducing the Legislature of the State to purchase the adjoining property—the ground upon which the mission convent was built, and upon which now stands a building used as a grocery store. This it is their intention to demolish, and to erect in its place a Texas Hall of Fame. In this temple will be placed statues and busts of the State's famous dead, and here will also be preserved the records of the dark and stormy days which made possible the glorious present. In addition to this the society will foster the study of Texan history and the movement for the preservation of historic landmarks and relics.

These Daughters of the Republic of

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Texas are the descendants of patriots who have left them a heritage unequalled in the annals of time, for fearlessness, bravery, and courage. Could any society have a more worthy, more beneficial object, than that of keeping alive in a country its patriotic enthusiasm, which, after all, is the keynote to a nation's greatness? By the honoring of a glorious past we strengthen our present, and by the care of our eloquent but voiceless monuments we are preparing a noble inspiration for our future.

To the indefatigable and untiring energy of the Daughters of the Republic, Texas owes the grateful debt of being able to show in what manner she honors and venerates her valiant and heroic dead. But of more significance is the preservation, as memorials for the inspiration of future generations of Texans, of the crumbling monuments and changing

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battle-fields where died in the cause of freedom the fathers of the State—men who made the names of San Jacinto, Goliad, and the Alamo immortal.

Progress, the essence of prosperity, is the embodiment of Americanism. But from the tourist's point of view progress loses twenty-fold in competition with sacred ruins and picturesque antiquity. A gleam from the blurred lantern on one of the Chili stands in the plaza counts for more with them than a block of modern buildings. And the fame of heroes, won through the Alamo and the other missions, neglected as they are by passers-by and weather-beaten by time, is what will endure in the memory of all who have seen or read of the old city of San Antonio.

This is a practical age we live in, yet human nature craves the heroic and the ideal. There are times in the affairs of every-day life when one must stop and

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ponder over the great and momentous deeds of bygone times. They make one's purpose in life more tangible, more real. That men before your time have done what to-day seems impossible, gives you a new inspiration, a greater strength of will and purpose to fight according to your ability the battle that life has prepared for you.

How many of you in San Antonio to-day have really contemplated the old Alamo building in the spirit of reminiscence, and learned the wonderful lesson it teaches—that of self-sacrifice? Watch it, if you have that privilege, in the silence of eventide, when the glow of a departing day throws its radiant color like a brilliant crimson mantle about the old ruin. How clearly the old battle scars stand out, vivid and lurid in the stones, red as the blood of the men who fought and died there. Look at it in the busy

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hurry of every-day life. Calm and majestic it stands amid the haggling of trade and the trafficking of commerce.

Then go and stand before it on a night when the moon throws a white halo over the plaza; when the lights of the city are darkened, the winds of heaven hushed, and the soft rippling of the distant river alone is heard. How its sinister old face frowns under the silver beams, as if it were still fighting with the years the siege that ended with the martyrdom of the brave spirits whom once it shielded.

How eloquently it speaks to us in its grimness and severity! Think of the story it tells to every true Texan heart—a story so soul-stirring that the recollection of it should make us all lift our heads with pride, and thank God that we are not only free-born American citizens, but that we are Texans as well. Search the histories of the world and you will not

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find a deed to equal that of the men who died within the Alamo that Texas might be free, for "Thermopylæ had its messenger of defeat—the Alamo had none."



II

The Present

RONALD HARWOOD quitted the carriage reluctantly as it stopped in front of the chapel of the Alamo. He looked into the chill sombreness of the interior of the church, shivered slightly, then turned his gaze toward the sun-filled plaza. He was loath to leave its warmth and brightness. The swaying palms in the centre of the square, the lazy, slowly-moving, cosmopolitan crowd that filled the narrow, crooked streets, all spoke of the mañana country.

The old Spanish-American city of San Antonio is very Southern in its habits, Mexican in its local color, and tropical in its climate. The aftermath of a foreign dynasty, old and picturesque, still per-

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vades the atmosphere of the town. It is a land of caressing sunshine and white moonlight—a land where the air is ever filled with the seductive odor of a fresh, blossoming flower.

Near by, in the shadow of the entrance to the chapel, squatted the gaunt, brown figure of a Mexican enveloped in a gay *zarape*, watching with unseeing eyes the hours drag wearily by,—an automaton, awakened into life by the occasional dusting, with a brush made of strips of paper, the flies that congregated on the Mexican *dulcies*, or candies, arranged with careful regularity on the little stand beside him.

Though Ronald Harwood had only just arrived in the Texas town, on his way to California, in his private car, he was congratulating himself upon having chosen this Southern route, because it afforded him a few hours' rest in the quaint, picturesque



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old town of San Antonio. He had chosen, as all strangers do, as the first object of his sight-seeing, the Alamo,—“the Thermopylæ of America.” He took a deep breath in the ozone-filled air, then stepped across the threshold of the chapel and into the dense cold shadows within.

“You would like me to show you about the church?”

It was a girl's voice that came from out of the shadows, deliciously low and musical—the rich tone that characterizes the voice of Southern women. Its owner was standing, half-obsured, behind a glass-covered case filled with souvenirs.

The young man started with an exclamation of pleasure and surprise. What he said was this:

“I thought I had left all the sunshine outside.”

The girl frowned slightly and blushed.

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She opened the case and took out a small, paper-bound book, which she offered to him.

"A full description of all the rooms is given inside," she said.

He saw that he had offended her and was sorry for it.

"If you don't mind, I would rather have you show me about the chapel—the light is poor—I am afraid I would find it rather difficult to read." He spoke almost timidly.

With seeming reluctance, the girl left her place and moved to the centre of the chapel. Harwood followed and stood beside her.

"This room," indicating with a graceful gesture the interior, "is where the last stand of the heroes of the Alamo was made." She paused and looked at him a moment. "You



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know, of course, the history of the fall of the Alamo?" she asked dubiously.

Harwood remembered in a vague, uncertain way of having read something about it. He nodded assent.

"I asked you," the girl said, "because so few strangers who come here seem to know anything at all about our history—in fact, Texans even are pitifully ignorant of it." She laughed a little shamefacedly.

"I should not have said that; it does not sound quite loyal, does it?" She was growing more friendly, but she paused again—his eyes were disconcerting.

"I am afraid," Harwood admitted frankly, "that I have forgotten about it—you will have to refresh my memory." Then he added quickly: "But you must be tired through having to tell the story to every one who comes here?"

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The girl's great eyes opened in horrified surprise.

"Tired telling the story of the greatest sacrifice in the history of the whole world—tired, and I a Texan!"

The pride with which she said that word "Texan" was a revelation to Harwood. He moved a step nearer to her.

"Please tell it to me; I should love to hear it from you."

She hesitated for a moment, then continued:

"You know that one hundred and forty-five Texans held the Mission against the attack of four thousand Mexicans?"

"I was not so sure of the number," Harwood answered seriously.

"I must read you the letter, the noblest ever penned, that Travis, the commander of the garrison, sent out from the doomed fortress. There was only one other appeal for aid from these men." The girl opened

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the book she held in her hand and read in a voice filled with fervid enthusiasm:

“ ‘COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO,

“ ‘BEJAR, Feby. 24th, 1836—

“ ‘*To the People of Texas & all Americans in the world,*

“ ‘FELLOW CITIZENS & COMPATRIOTS—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continued Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—*I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all despatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements*

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daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—VICTORY OR DEATH.

“ ‘Lt.Col. comdt

“ ‘P. S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels & got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves—

“ ‘TRAVIS’ ”

The color had risen and flushed the girl's cheeks. Her large brown eyes grew bright in their excitement.

“Is n't that splendid?”

Her enthusiasm was infectious. Harwood began to tingle with it.

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"The bulliest thing I ever heard of a man's doing," he said, looking into her eyes.

"It was here," she went on, "that Travis called his men together and offered them the chance of escape or permission to surrender, and told them of his determination to stay in the fort and fight to the end. He then took his sword and drew a line with it across the dirt floor of the chapel and called upon those who were willing to die with him for the sake of their country to step across. Colonel Bowie—of course I don't have to tell you who *he* was—asked that his cot be carried across the line and placed by Travis's side. Bowie was ill at the time. They all, except one, followed Bowie. A man named Rose hesitated, and finally said he would take the chance of escaping, which he did. But think of it—out of one hundred and forty-five men, only one was afraid to die.

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“Inside the besieged fortress were the small number of valiant Texans; outside its walls were more than five thousand Mexican troops, ready, eager, at the word of command to annihilate the trapped Texans. In order to make you understand more clearly, I must read the official orders governing the attack:

“ ‘OFFICIAL ORDERS FOR ATTACK.

“ ‘The reserves will be composed of the battalion of Sappers and Miners, and the five companies of the Grenadiers of the Matamoras, Jimenes and Aldamas battalions of regulars, and of the Toluca and San Luis battalions of volunteers.

“ ‘The reserve will be commanded by the General-in-Chief.’

“This was the order given by the President of Mexico, and commander of her armies, to six thousand Mexicans, the élite of the Mexican army, who had been besieging less than two hundred

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Texans for thirteen days. It speaks for itself.

“On March 7th General Santa Anna issued a ‘Proclamation,’ in which he speaks of the immolation of the Texans as a matter of justice, and argues that the ‘Army of Operations’ has been marched into Texas for the performance of such deeds.

“Ah, if I could only make you see and feel as we Texans feel about that terrible day, but I can’t.” The girl sighed—Harwood was entranced.

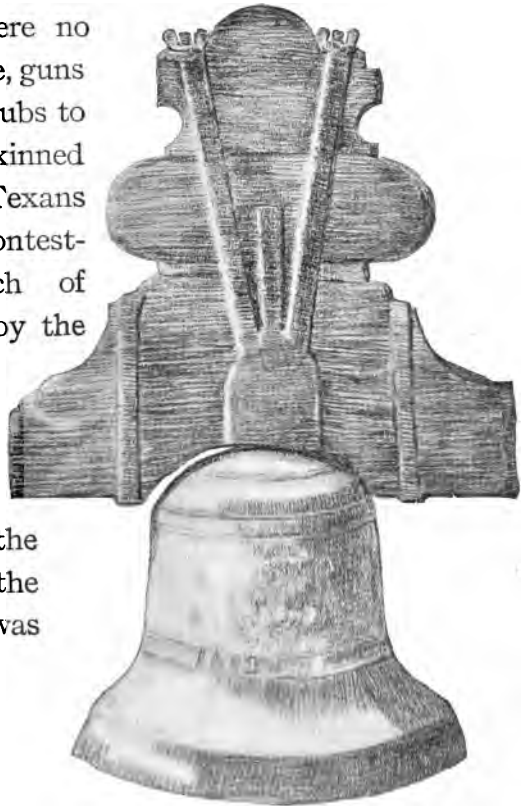
“Patiently the doomed Texans waited—waited for the death that was inevitable. It was at dawn that the attack commenced. Santa Anna’s army swept down on the fortress. Through the rain of shot it crept closer, gaining steadily, until the outer walls were battered down.”

The girl paused an instant.

“It is terrible to think of that great

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army of Mexicans swooping down on the handful of Americans inside the Mission grounds. The Texans fought with all the fury of their just resentment and the courage of their brave souls. When the ammunition had been exhausted and the cannon were no longer available, guns were used as clubs to fell the dark-skinned enemy. The Texans desperately contested every inch of ground until by the overwhelming force of numbers they were forced back into the chapel, where the last stand was made.



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"It was on this hallowed spot that the little band of Texans, sorely wounded and with clothing torn to tatters by Mexican bullets, stood their ground. Not one inch did they give—it was fight to the death, and death it was. After a hand-to-hand conflict lasting two hours and a half, the last surviving Texan sank to the ground, shot to death by Mexican bullets.

"Though the Mexicans shamefully outnumbered the Americans, it took the bravery of a Spartan to enter that chapel. Mowed down like sheaves of wheat with a scythe, the Mexicans fell before the deadly fire of the Texans. The Mexicans paid thirteen-fold for the life of every Texan, and every Texan gave his life's blood that his country should be freed of Mexican tyranny.

"Oh! you do not wonder why we Texans are so rightfully proud of these

The Alamo

men who gave us freedom, these men who died here, Travis, Bowie, Crockett, Bonham and all the rest."

Harwood delighted in the quick animation and patriotic fire of this daughter of the Lone Star State.

"No," he said, "I do not wonder and can understand *now* why you are proud of the Alamo. It is the finest thing I ever heard."

The girl turned away her face and Harwood thought the pink of her ear beautiful. The story and the manner to its telling thrilled him, as it thrills all who listen to its recital.

"It was n't as if Travis had been an old man, he was only twenty-seven," said the girl; "that was young to die, was n't it?"

Harwood smiled. "I am glad now I did n't die at twenty-seven."

Again the girl turned from him suddenly.

The Custodian of

"If you will come this way I will show you the room in which Bowie lay sick." She led the way to a small room to the left of the entrance.

"During the siege he was suffering from pneumonia and was nursed by a Mexican woman. He was killed in this room over here"—the girl walked to the room on the opposite side of the chapel. "This is the Baptistry and it was here that the women congregated and here they brought Bowie, that he might die with the others. On his sick-bed he fought until he was shot to death by Mexican bullets."

Harwood uttered an exclamation:

"And to think we have an inspiration like this in our country for an epic and the histories fail even to do it justice!"

"Davy Crockett fell outside in the court-yard," the girl went on. "That old building outside is soon to be cleared away and a fitting surrounding given this

The Alamo

chapel. The State has just recently purchased the property. It was through the efforts of patriotic women that it was saved for historic purposes."

"In whose care is this old church now?" Harwood asked.

"There is an organization in Texas known as the Daughters of the Republic. Of course you know the members of this organization are the descendants of the pioneer Texans—of the patriots of the State—the men who left a heritage glorious and unequalled for fearlessness, bravery, and courage."

"You are one of them?" asked Harwood.

"You should know that without asking," the girl replied, "for were I not a Daughter of the Republic I should not be



The Custodian of

the proper custodian of the Church, for to whom else are the walls of these Texas ruins so sacred, or the names of her heroic dead so precious?"

"You make one envy these dead heroes. Death would lose its terror to have one's eulogy sung by you," the man replied.

"Are these things for sale?" Harwood asked, looking into the case.

"Yes," she answered, "for the benefit of the Alamo Fund."

When Harwood had finished his purchasing the case was practically empty.

"Send them to the Southern Pacific station," he said. "Harwood is the name, Ronald Harwood, private car 'Vera.'"

"That name is very familiar," the girl said, looking up after writing the address; "why, you are the son of the president of the road."

"Yes," Harwood answered, "I am."

The Alamo

"You are just passing through?" the girl asked.

"Yes, I leave to-night for California. Would you mind telling me your name I might want some more souvenirs." He covered a smile and there was a twinkle in the girl's eyes as she replied:

"Just address me as Custodian of the Alamo." And she added: "I hope you will find you want more souvenirs; it is good for the Fund."

They both laughed. The girl looked at her watch.

"I am sorry to turn you out, but I close the chapel at twelve, to go home for lunch."

"Oh! I am so sorry, it is nearly one o'clock and I have kept you here all this time. I really must apologize, but you see you made the morning so interesting. I forgot even time—will you forgive me?"

"I have nothing to forgive—you made

The Custodian of

the morning very profitable, so we are even."

"Good-bye, Miss——"

He held out his hand.

"Good-bye. I hope you will like San Antonio well enough to come again. We who live here think it has a great charm."

"It has, Miss——"

"Copely," the girl said, "if you insist."

"I *shall* come again, Miss Copely."

For a moment—as long as he dared—he held the small hand of the girl in his, and when she drew it away he felt he had never in all his life hated to give up anything so much. As reluctantly as he had entered the chapel, he left it. The face of its fair custodian danced in the sunlight before his eyes and the story of the old ruin as told by her thrilled him.

The sunlight had died away in the west. A soft night wind crept up from

The Alamo

the southern sea. The plaza lay in semi-darkness. The gray walls of the old Alamo frowned upon the dusk.

Again Harwood stood before the ruin, irresolute, as before, but from a far different cause. It was not the cold chill from within that deterred him, but a sudden beating of his heart that was well-nigh suffocating him.

Finally, he entered and found Miss Copely arranging her things to leave for the night. She looked up, surprised, and if the light had been better he would have seen a deep flush of happiness spread over the girl's face.

"You don't mean to say you want more souvenirs so soon?"

It hurt him that she spoke so lightly.

"Will you pardon me if I speak very plainly to you, Miss Copely?" His voice was tense, passion-filled. "I came back because I could not leave San Antonio

The Custodian of

without seeing you again; because you are the one woman I have seen who has suddenly interested me above all else; because—well, because I love you.”

The stillness of the chapel was intense, though the man's heart was beating violently, and the man's words had brought to the girl's heart a joy that she had never even dreamed.

He was now close beside her. She could hear his quick breathing and even in the darkness she could feel his look like a caress.

“Won't you say something to me,” the man persisted, “just a word? I am going away to-night, but I will come back if you ask me to—God knows I want to.”

The girl spoke hardly above a whisper.

“What could I say?”

The man caught her hand in both of his.”

“Tell me you want me to come back,”

The Alamo

he pleaded. "Tell me that when I do come back you will let me take you with me."

"But my position as custodian here?"

"Ah—if you only knew how much I needed you. There are many who can tell of the valor of these dead heroes, but there is only one who can satisfy this living being. Say you want me to come for you. I shall never leave unless you do."

The girl stood back from him, looking at him long and earnestly.

"You ask me this, knowing nothing of me, who or what I am?"

Harwood stepped toward her quickly, and took her in his arms. "I ask you this because I love you." His voice sank to a whisper. "What does the rest matter—will you come with me, sweetheart?"

In the darkness of the chapel his eyes

The Custodian of the Alamo

burned into hers, his warm breath fanned her cheek.

“If you love me,” he pleaded, “you will come with me.”

Closer she nestled in his arms, and with her mouth against his she breathed the words:

“Yes, I will come.”

SISTER GENEVIEVE

SISTER GENEVIEVE

THE river was quiet and peaceful in this lonely spot, and the large trees on either side drooped down to the water's edge, casting long, dark shadows in the slowly moving current.

The place seemed shut off from the world, and so it was, for the drowsy little stream flowed tranquilly along the lower edge of the large grounds that belonged to the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

It was a very old convent, and its crumbling walls sheltered good, pure women who had renounced the vanities of the world, and consecrated their lives to God.

In the waning afternoon of one of the early autumn days, when the light was

Sister Genevieve

beginning to fade a little in the clear sky, and the young trees and shrubs wore an aspect of lifelessness, a nun was resting in this secluded place. A piece of half-finished embroidery was lying in her lap, her eyes were closed, and her hand was resting wearily against the trunk of a large tree back of the bench on which she was sitting. The upturned face in its whiteness had the semblance of marble, and the lines in it were those of suffering rather than age, for Sister Genevieve was

young, and had worn the black veil of her order but a short time.

Most of her school days had been passed under the guidance of these good Sisters, and when she came back to them to take up



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their life the Mother Superior looked incredulously at the beautiful girl, who was giving up so much to begin an existence of unabating sacrifice and duty.

She had been in retreat only a few weeks when the roses faded from her cheeks, leaving them almost transparent in their clear whiteness, and certain lines about the face had greatly saddened.

The good Mother was fearful lest her favorite young charge had somewhat repented of her hasty decision to become a bride of the Church, and in her talks with the novice had hinted at such possibilities, but the latter had assured her that it was not so, and the Mother then thought the change must come from too much prayer and meditation. The young novice was always at her beads. When she had at last taken her vows, and become a cloistered nun, there was no one more

Sister Geneveive

beloved than the sweet, gentle Sister Genevieve.

There was very little resemblance left in this silent figure to the bright, beautiful girl who two years before had closed the door of the world, with its pleasures and pains, and had come to finish her life in the service of God. As the days and months went by Sister Genevieve's paleness became more and more noticeable, until she seemed to be fading away, and the nuns prayed more fervently for the restoration of this sweet Sister. A special dispensation had excused her from the more rigid fasts. Much of her work had been taken from her, and she was allowed to spend a great part of her time in the open air. Only Sister Genevieve herself knew what it was that was eating her life away.

How could any one else know or realize the depth of the sorrow that filled her

Sister Genevieve

whole being. She had fought against it with all the strength of her will, until at last it had proved too strong for her and dominated her whole existence.

Night after night, in her cold, cheerless little room, she would pace the floor in an agony of restless torture, sometimes flinging herself on her knees in the very abandonment of grief and calling to God to let her die. He must take her—she could not bear it much longer—human beings could not suffer long as she was suffering. Then a feeling of rebellion would take possession of her, and in her bitter anguish she would cry out against her fate. God had given her life, and then had cheated her of it. He had let her see what happiness could be, but in the tasting of its first joys He had made her renounce it forever.

It was at such times as these that she would force her mind to seek prayer, but,

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fight even as she would with all the strength of her young being to think only of the worship of her God, the prayer was but of her lips, and she shuddered, afraid and fearfully, for she knew that the image of God's crucified Son was not in her heart.

Fervently, miserably, pitifully, she wrestled with her tortured self.

If He had only made her weak, like some women, she might have been enjoying that happiness now; but because she had the strength to resist, to tear herself away in time, she must be made to suffer like this.



Where was the justice of it?

Ah, if she could live over again that mad moment, would she do as she had done then—would she send him from her, not because she

Sister Genevieve

was afraid to face whatever sorrow the future might have held for them both, but because of a noble, trusting woman, who had the right to love where she had not? She might have placed her hand in his and defied the world, but for the face of the other woman.

No—she could not have endured that, and it was at such a thought as this that a peace would steal over her and her prayers would end in holier things.

But sometimes a strong feeling would possess her that she must see him, must find him and tell him how useless it was to try and make herself believe that she could live without him. They would forget everything but each other, they would live in and for the love which had come to them. He was her very life and soul, and for his kisses and the warmth of his arms she would renounce the heaven that she had become a nun to gain.

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Then, starting up, afraid lest these thoughts should shape themselves into words, she would press her hot, feverish hands against her lips and hold them there to keep back the sacrilegious sounds; and, creeping back into her bed, she would lie shivering through the long, dreary hours of the night, until the sound of the rising bell would make her realize there was another long day to live through, with nothing to hope for, or pray for, but death.

Sometimes, in the long hours of solitude that she was allowed to spend by the river, she would give rein to her thoughts, and wonder what she would do if he came to her as he said he would.

His last words had been: "A day may come when I can go to you and ask you to be my wife. If that day ever comes, I swear solemnly that I will seek you and find you."

Sister Genevieve

Suppose that the day should come,
would she be able to resist again? would
she have the strength to send him from



her a second time, and live up to the vows
she had made to the Church?

So absorbed was she in these thoughts

Sister Genevieve

that she did not hear the sound of oars on the water break through the stillness, and it was only when a boat grated on the edge of the bank near her that she looked up. With a cry of alarm Sister Genevieve sprang to her feet, and for a moment stood like a statue, white and still.

Her thoughts had taken a living form, and before her stood, not an apparition, as she first thought, but the man she loved and for whom she had buried herself from the world, and for whose sake her very life-blood seemed to be slowly leaving her.

“Jean, Jean! Have you no word for me?” He scarcely voiced the question, but held out his arms imploringly.

Sister Genevieve’s frail body trembled like a leaf in the wind.

“God’s mother, help me!”

The words were breathed faintly, inarticulately. She caught at her throat.

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The color of the trees and the light of the sky seemed to fade suddenly and a mist swam before her eyes. With a great effort she shrank from his outstretched arms.

“No, no,—God—no! It is too late. By the oath of eternal salvation I have given my soul and body to Him.”

Her black-robed figure was drawn to its full height, her head was thrown back, her eyes looked up into the vaulted blue, and her bared arm, like a white shaft, pointed upwards. A gray look of death swept over the man's features; he stood irresolute—then sprang forward and crushed her to him, murmuring her name, the name she had not heard since her novitiate.

“Jean, Jean, my love, my Jean!” was all that the man could force his lips to say. He could not let her escape him now.

Sister Genevieve's frail, shaking form

Sister Genevieve

lay limp in his strong arms. "Thank God," he whispered close to her ear, "you are in my arms at last. So I shall hold you, my darling, until death. There can be no sin in your coming to me, my beloved, for as God made us, it was willed that we should belong to one another. Why make a prisoner of your body when your soul is mine?" "Jean, my love, speak to me. What else matters?"

The voice, passion-filled, roused the woman, though the sense of the words were lost.

Very gently he drew her back to her seat. Her knees trembled so that she sank heavily upon it. Instinctively her hand sought her beads, and she pressed the cross to her cold lips, but no sound came from them.

The man was scanning eagerly every feature of her pale face.

"How white you are, Jean, how white,

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my love, but your eyes,—how beautiful, how gloriously beautiful! Your hair is hidden from me. It is a sacrilege it should be so. To hide its gold is like shutting out the rays of God's sunshine."

It was then he saw the cross, and with a low inarticulate sound he snatched God's image from her sobbing mouth.

"Give me your lips, Jean. You shall give them to me—they are all I want, Jean, your lips, for the rest of life's short hour. After that, my love—after that—you and they and all things go back to God again." Holding her to him, he pressed his lips passionately to hers.

In their kiss the world was forgotten—they had given themselves to each other for eternity.

The man was the first to speak:

"My wife is dead, and I have sought you out and found you as I swore I would."

Then followed such wild, reckless words

Sister Genevieve

—words that she, a cloistered nun, should never have listened to; and yet she was powerless to move—she was as one dazed, without even the strength to speak.

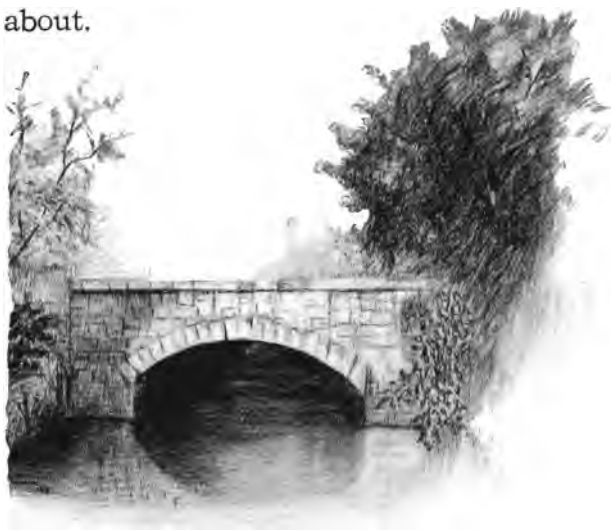
The man was telling her of his life since the time they had discovered their love for each other—the bitterness of parting when they had the courage to say good-bye. It was so pitiful, the suffering he had gone through since then, that in listening to the recital of it she forgot her own—forgot her vows—forgot the habit she was wearing, the habit of one of God's children—forgot everything but the man beside her, the man she had loved, and—God help her—loved still. She placed her hand tenderly on his:

“Nothing can take you from me now,” the man said, bending over the hand that lay upon his own.

“No,” said the nun, speaking for the first time. Her voice was tender to the

Sister Genevieve

verge of tears. "It could not have gone on like this much longer. I did not know what my love was when I thought I could forget it by burying myself here. I did not know its strength or depth. My soul has starved with hunger for you ever since I closed those doors behind me. I thought I could shut you out. I wanted to be as good and pure as the saints I had read about.



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"But I am a woman, with all a woman's power of loving and longing to be loved in return. I thought by starving my soul I could in time crush out the love for you that filled it—I did not understand."

She had taken his face between her hands, and was looking deep into his eyes, reading there all the love that would be hers. The first flush of color that had been in Sister Genevieve's pale cheeks rested there now.

When the evening bell pealed out through the convent stillness, calling the nuns to prayer, a boat glided out from among the willows, and the man in it stopped rowing for a moment to watch the slowly retreating figure on the bank. The nun turned and looked back. There was no sign or motion on her part, only a look from the eyes. Then the trees closed around her and hid her from

Sister Genevieve

sight, and the man pulled quickly down the stream.

Sister Genevieve drew the veil down over her face, as if to hide its look of guilty happiness, and hastened toward the convent.

It was the vesper hour, and the chanting nuns, like a procession of shadowy ghosts, moved noiselessly into the chill of the silent, dimly lighted chapel.

When Sister Genevieve joined them, no one would have thought that this devout figure, with bowed head, was the one who but the moment before had looked into the eyes of the man she loved. The good Sisters did not know that the sweet-faced, saintly nun they loved had that day given herself back to the world, and would henceforth be acting a lie, which by them could not be forgiven but by years of bitter atonement.

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While the low voice of the priest monotonously intoned the service the nuns bowed low over their clasped hands, and they seemed lost in prayer—all but one. She was looking straight before her with an expression not of holy things, but as if her gaze had penetrated the thick walls and rested on the world outside. Sister Genevieve's color had come back to her cheeks, and her eyes had regained some of their old brilliancy, but there was an unrest in her soul which kept her in continual torment. Her vows and her duty to her church and the earthly love in her heart were at constant conflict. Since yesterday she had lived as one in a dream. She could think of nothing but the words:

“I have sought you out and found you, as I swore I would.”

The voice of the priest and the solemn service recalled her wandering thoughts.

Sister Genevieve

She looked eagerly around at the still kneeling figures, and her eyes finally rested on the Mother Superior. They



moistened, and a tear stole down her cheek and fell on the white guimpe. It was the last time Sister Genevieve would ever pray with them, the last time she would ever see any of them, and her heart throbbed with a bitter pain when she thought of how these nuns

Sister Genevieve

would feel toward her when they knew what she had done. They had been kind to her and she loved them. But they must pity her when they knew her story, and she had left a letter for the Mother Superior telling her everything. Sister Genevieve bowed her head in a long prayer for forgiveness. Her very soul seemed shaken with the fervor of the appeal.

"I could not give him up this time. I had not the strength. God forgive me."

The words echoed through the silent chapel, and Sister Genevieve started up trembling to find herself alone in the dark, silent House of God. So absorbed had she been in the last supplication that she had not seen the nuns leave the chapel.

She hurried out into the night. For a moment she stood looking at the old building; then, with a silent good-bye to

Sister Genevieve

the Sisters, turned and walked quickly to the river. A man's figure stood in the deep shadow on the bank. At sight of her he rushed forward with extended arms, but she stopped him with a gesture of appeal.

"Jean," he cried, "do you not come to me freely!"

The woman moved into his arms.

"Freely I come to you, my beloved," she whispered, "for I have just stolen my soul from God to give it to you."

Folding a large cloak about her the man led her to the boat. Stepping in after her, they were soon out in the stream.

Silently Sister Genevieve unfastened the beads from her girdle, and, holding them for a moment, let them slip slowly into the cold, still water.

**JUANA OF THE MISSION DE
LA CONCEPCION**

JUANA OF THE MISSION DE LA CONCEPCION¹

I

OVER a century and a half ago, a handful of pioneer Franciscan monks entered into the wilderness of the new-found world. They marked their pathway with great edifices of substantial white stone reared with infinite toil and labor, interrupted not only by every mechanical difficulty and material want, but quite as frequently by the arrows of unseen bows or warning booms of alarm bells.

The mason who builds with trowel in one hand and sword in the other builds strongly. The ecclesiastical tendency of the makers of these missions was not to

¹Established 1731.

Juana of the

be checked by mere bodily danger, and the portals and windows of most of these churches are, even in their decay, among



the most interesting specimens of Spanish ornamentation, rich carving, and at one time brilliant coloring that exist to-day.

Vineyards, fruit orchards, and gardens gradually enclosed their walls. These were watered by the winding stream

Mission de la Conception

which always determined the site of such settlements. One or more belfry towers capped each of these consecrated strongholds. In that country of undulating levels and unfathomable silences the excursive monk would have indeed had to stray far not to hear the strokes of the bell bidding him to his angelus.

In these churches these godly men preached their faith. By sheer force of will, strenuous efforts, and determined courage exerted in behalf of their religion, they forced the Indian to accept and kneel to the Christian God instead of the great Manitou.

The pious fathers who came in the name of the cross had no desire for greed or personal aggrandizement. Their sacrifice was one made in the name of the Saviour of mankind, to instruct and enlighten the unknowing and unseeing. These mission citadels became the seats

Juana of the

of power in New Spain. Through their dusky corridors these long-robed silent rulers walked. In their hands they carried a breviary in lieu of a sceptre. In the cloisters filled with clinging vines and fragrant roses they said their beads.

And the pathos of it all is, that these gray-robed friars passed away long before the wonderful seeds of their untiring labors became fruitful. To-day many of their bones are rotting under the soil first tilled by their patient hands, and the stones and mortar of the edifices they so miraculously put together on the wilds of a lonely prairie are crumbling into ruin and decay. The exquisitely rich and delicate renaissance decorations are worn away by the storms of years, and headless figures of weather-beaten saints and virgins still repose in their ornamental niches.

Savage - looking cactus bushes and

Mission de la Concepcion

feathery ferns grow in confusion on the summits of the decaying walls, and from out the crevices of the disjointed stones lizards crawl to bask in the luxurious warmth of the southern sun. The large entrances once guarded by massive cedar doors, beautiful with intricately carved panels, are now open archways, through which the wind sighs sadly and deeply, like the moan of barefoot friars whose ghostly figures are doomed to linger on at the old ruins, praying and weeping over their lost glories.



To-day these Missions stand silent and deserted, their gray antiquity clothed with an atmosphere of fascinating traditions

Juana of the

and thrilling legends. Their crumbling, moss-covered stones are all we have left to remind us of the past, veiling with the curtain of obscurity the secrets guarded so sacredly by the scarred and battered walls of these voiceless monuments, which even in their ruins and decay awe us to silence and wonder by their magnificence.

II

I tied my horse to the rude wooden fence enclosing the old Mission and passed through the gate into the neglected, unkempt garden. Everywhere was silence—solitude.

It was an afternoon in the late autumn. The air was soft and balmy and filled with a bright caressing sunshine, which fell full against the façade of the old Franciscan church.

The twin towers of the gray old edifice

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were sharply outlined against the deep, clear blue of the Texas sky. While efforts at restoration had seamed its sombre gray front, and crumbling corners had been replaced, yet the same mantle of antiquity that clothed all these old church strongholds clings to this one. Cold, sullen, forbidding it confronted me, resentful perhaps that its glory had departed, but proud in the knowledge that its stone walls stand a fitting monument to the bravery, perseverance, and Christian valor of its founders.

One of the low wooden doors leading into the chapel stood half open. I entered the dim, chill house of worship. Its atmosphere breathed of the dead years. To-day there were no white-robed acolytes to swing censers of burning incense at the foot of the altar. Its whitewashed walls rose unbroken to the curved roof. To the west were some windows and through

Juana of the

these the golden light of the sun-filled afternoon penetrated faintly. An occasional unframed picture of a saint stared with vacant eyes out of the canvasses.

A baptismal font of elaborate workmanship caught the eye, while the mind harked back to the time when its waters bestowed the sacrament of holy Church upon the offspring of the savages of the wilderness.

In a corner was a confessional where once hidden priests listened to the



Mission de la Concepcion

whispered tale of sin, and comforted the penitents with the consolation of forgiveness.

The choir loft swung above the entrance—its purpose gone. No strain of Latin anthem intoned by gray-robed friars filled the gloom of the vaulted interior. Some tawdry artificial flowers adorned the altar, while over it hung a plain wooden crucifix.

Seeing an open doorway to the right of the altar I passed through this and into a room once used as a sacristy. Its appearance was more desolate and bare than the chapel. A door in this room led out into an open court or *patio*, partly surrounded by arches, evidently the cloisters where were formerly the cells of the padres. To the left some crumbling stone steps circled upwards in the thickness of the rocks, to what at one time may have been a tower.

Juana of the

I climbed these carefully, very carefully, fearful lest the uncertain footing might suddenly precipitate me in the débris of loose stones and cactus bushes below.

Following the curve of the steps I came out upon a flat roofing of stone, and found myself face to face with a girl wonderfully beautiful. Her eyes were lustrous—black, filled with a wild unrest—and I shivered as I saw the look of madness in their depths. She ignored my start of surprise and stood silent and defiant before me. There was almost a daring insolence in the girl's attitude. Her figure was willowy, slender, and her long night-colored hair fell dishevelled about her face.

After watching me for the space of a few seconds with the suspicious cunning of her kind, she drew a long, shivering breath. Her hands clinched her throat

Mission de la Concepcion

in despair; she sank to her knees on the hard stones, and throwing out her arms gave vent to a low heart-breaking wailing. Her apparent obliviousness to my presence, and a certain fascination, made me linger even against my will.

Suddenly the demented creature threw her body violently forward until her forehead touched the rough stones. In a wild paroxysm of passion she kissed over and over again the hard stone roof. When she raised her head I saw a dark stain where her lips had pressed. It looked the color of blood. I shivered involuntarily at the thought suggested by the deep red spot, and I gently retraced my steps down the steps, not daring or wishing to intrude longer on the unhappy girl.

"The Señor has seen Juana?" Out of the shadows came the low voice.

I was startled. The meagre, emaciated form of an old Mexican woman stood

Juana of the

in the pathway. She was brown and withered and looked as ancient as a fragment of the old ruin. A pair of keen eyes were looking into mine.

"You speak English?" I said, my tone expressing surprise.

"Why not, Señor?" replied the woman, as she drew her rusty black shawl closer about her head and shoulders. "I am paid to tell to strangers the history of the church."



"You are the custodian, then?"

She nodded her head.

"You should have let me know when you came." She cast a glance up at the tower. "I never let strangers up there." She pointed with her bony finger toward the steps.

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“Juana is always there. She was a good girl Juana—but she loved, and when a woman loves it is always like that. Did the Señor see the blood?”

She crossed herself as she asked the question. In the uncertain gloom her face went gray.

For the space of a second her lips moved silently.

Yes, I had seen the spot. It was, then, as I had surmised, blood. Silence fell between us for a moment.

The old woman turned to me very slowly.

“The Señor would like to see the rest of the Mission?”

My zest for an inspection of the old ruin and a history of its past had considerably cooled. The tragedy of the present and the wild, haunting eyes of the mad girl absorbed me unpleasantly. The old woman had noticed my abstraction.

Juana of the

"The Señor is wondering about Juana—is it not so?" Her cracked voice was hard and without emotion.

"She is crazy, Señor, that is all. She does no harm."

I looked from the old woman out across the shallow valley. Southward the fields sloped to the edge of great pecan and cottonwood trees skirting the river. It seemed to have become suddenly very still—oppressively so—you could have fancied yourself in a place of the dead. An utter sense of loneliness crept over me. Involuntarily I turned to the woman.

"But the girl is so young—so very young. She has the look almost of a child."

The wrinkled face of the old woman remained impassive.

"She *is* young, Señor, it is true, but not too young to have loved." Her eyes

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sought mine and I thought I detected a flash of quick animation. "Juana is an Indian. With us one's loves and one's passions come like the fire of the sun on a still summer day."

"Is love then the cause of her misfortune?" I asked.

"God and the Virgin know that it is. Did I not tell the Señor that before?" The old woman crossed herself. She did not speak again for some time and I thought she was quite lost in the past. I did not disturb her nor question her. I did not wish to seem curious about the poor girl's unhappy condition.

III

The shadows lengthened about the old ruin. A great quiet cloaked the place. It seemed wrapped in an atmosphere of loneliness, of sadness, of cold, sterile lifelessness.

Juana of the

Varying shades of yellow and brown tinged the landscape; even the last stalk of corn standing among its fallen companions had seared and withered.

A few field larks flitted here and there among the fallen débris.

The wind had begun to blow up cold.

With intense vigor I drank into my lungs its fresh, vivifying ozone. I had no inclination for the morbid feeling which had taken possession of me.

The old woman at my side felt its sharpness and shivered as she drew her shawl closer about her head and shoulders.

Her eyes were dry and bright, her face drawn, expressionless as a granite mask.

She was indeed a figure who in age and decay was a fitting guardian for the ancient citadel where on every side were the vanishing traces of a splendor long since forgotten. And the girl on the roof!

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Beneath the tumbling towers these two, the demented creature and the aged Mexican, seemed to embody the stillness of the dead.

IV

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The toneless voice of the Mexican woman took up the story again.

"Perhaps I should not keep Juana here. They tell me there are places where they care for such, but she has been here since she was a baby and she is harmless—quite harmless. It is her eyes that frighten people. Her eyes have looked like that ever since the morning when she found him dead up there."

"Found who dead?" I



Juana of the

could not help but ask the question.

"Why, Andres, of course." The words were spoken almost impatiently. It was as if the old woman resented my lack of knowledge of the tragedy.

"She found him there, you say?" I wanted her to continue.

"Yes, but she was not the first to find him. Some strangers like yourself; a lady and her husband had come to visit the Mission. They had gone up on the roof to see the view. It was allowed them. Perhaps you, Señor, noticed that the view is fine?"

I nodded my head. The woman continued:

"I stood here waiting for them just as I have for you to-day. I heard a cry. I had started up the steps, but I could not move quickly, and I met the Señor and the lady. His arm was

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about her and she was white like death."

"There is a man killed up there," he said.

"I went up to see for myself. Mother of God! I won't forget the sight. There he was, stretched out on his face. I could see the blood around him on the stones. His knife was near him. Afterwards when they picked him up they found a flower in his hand—said it came off the dress the fair-haired woman had worn at the dance. Men sometimes go mad like that for love. And they never found any one to take Andres's place with the musicians. The Americans, it seemed, were pleased with his playing." Again there was a long pause.

"You are from the cold land, Senor?"

The sad story of Juana had passed quickly from her mind. Not so with me. I ignored her question.

Juana of the

"And the fair-haired woman was—whom did you say?"

"Mother of God! how do I know who she was—she was some stranger like yourself. She came to the dances where Andres played, and he like a fool loved her."

I had angered her. My story would be lost. But I had not yet learned about Juana.

"And the girl up there"—I motioned with my hand toward the steps—"she loved this Andres? He was her sweetheart?"

I ventured the question hoping to get at the girl's story.

"Her sweetheart — Mother of God! Why, Andres was her husband!"



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After some moments I felt her hand touch my sleeve.

"With your permission, Señor, I will show you what is left of the old wall. My duty is to talk of these things."

I looked at her wrinkled brown skin and bent body and thought silently—discreetly. Yes, she was right—her duty was to talk of the past, as befitted her age. The tragedy of to-day left her as unmoved to its horror as the romances and past grandeur of the old stone ruin she was guarding failed to stir her imagination.

I did not move, but looked again across the undulating fields. I must have shivered slightly.

"It is better that we move out into the sunshine. It is too cold here, perhaps, for the Señor." She drew me forward.

"The old wall is just over here, Señor, if you will follow."

Juana of the

I took out some loose change from my pocket.

"I am afraid I shall not have time to-day." I tried to speak reassuringly. The money clinked in the hollow of her sunken palm. A look of satisfaction crossed her face as she noted the amount.

"Many thanks. The Señor will come again? He has seen nothing and there is much of interest, so they who visit here say."

I did not answer but mounted my horse

V

The sun had gone down behind the trees that fringed the river. The warmth seemed to have died out of everything, and earth and sky were as cold and lifeless as the rough stones of the Mission.

As I rode back to the old town through the gathering shadows of the twilight, I

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thought out of what small things are woven the great tragedies of life, and then I thought of the old woman and the girl.

The freshened night wind murmured with a vague unrest through the tops of the trees. I turned in my saddle, impelled by a fascination peculiar, terrible, morose. The outlines of the old church were barely distinguishable.

Darkness like a great sombre mantle of gloom had settled about its frowning gray brow.

I quickened my horse's gait and rode on, trying to blot out as best I could from my memory the vivid haunting picture of a girl's eyes filled with the cunning look of madness.

**THE OLD PRIEST OF SAN
FRANCISCO DE LA ESPADA**

THE OLD PRIEST OF SAN FRANCISCO DE LA ESPADA¹

THE most remote of the several Missions that cluster around San Antonio stands on the bank of the San Antonio River, nine miles below the old town. Its dedication was to the founder of the great order of the Franciscans, Saint Francis of Assisi—Saint Francis of the Sword. Its tower is shaped in the

¹ Established 1731.



The Old Priest of

form of a sword-hilt; its name Espada is appropriate to the conception.

It is more of a ruin than the other old churches in this region, and perhaps for this reason it seems more solitary—more alone; and clings more tenaciously to the history of its dead days by very reason of its isolation, crumbling stones, and pitiful neglect.

It was in the convent yard of this ruin that the Texas Army of Independence made its first camping ground. The granary, fortress walls, tumbled monastery, are relics of the past. The brilliant colored frescoes which once ornamented the façade of the old church, to the delight and awe of the childlike savages, have been dimmed and partially obliterated by exposure to the weather and the unsparing hand of time.

Bits of iron artistically wrought still keep their hold in the falling stone. A

San Francisco de la Espada

doorway of Moorish design gives entrance into the darkened chapel. Suspended from the centre of three great stone arches that span its spire, hang three bells that in the gray dawn and purple twilight of earlier days summoned a savage world to the worship of a Christian God.

To-day these bells are voiceless. Their liquid tones no longer make music in the quiet evening. They are rusting to destruction in fitting keeping with the age-touched walls of the old ruin which they have so long and faithfully served.

Back of the rude sacristy, through a doorway, was a garden, enclosed by a low stone wall, over the rough stones of which climbed clinging vines. Here the world and its strident noise was shut out. Here oblivion covered one as a cloud hides the face of the moon.

It was to this habitation, filled with

The Old Priest of

heavy silence and lonely as the grave, that a saint-like man came to subdue the devil in his flesh—to fight out in the still solitude the temptation of a memory.

It is to the deserted abodes of the living that the weary-hearted wend their despairing footsteps in search of their one goal—death. It is not for us, who are but human, to gauge the strength of a temptation or the depth of a passion. For is not the sincerity of the human soul as a fleeting shadow caught from the face of the burning sun by the outspread wings of an eagle in its flight?

But it is not always the weak of will who voluntarily pass living into the sepulchre of the dead.

Father Gilot had come as one in the night to the Mission, leaving behind him in the darkness the years of an already spent life, in which the suppressed fires of his youth left nothing but ashes. He

San Francisco de la Espada

had taken up his rigidly abstemious existence, unquestioned and unquestioning. In the silent, unmolested garden of the Mission, Father Gilot had found, to a certain extent, what he had long sought—oblivion.

In its dark, sheltered corners where deep shadows congregated, unkissed by the glory of the sun, the priest at times forgot even the desire of his soul; for when one lives but to pray there should be no sorrow, no desire. This partial peace had not come to him at once. His days had been filled with fasting and prayer.

In the long, quiet nights, and the longer, stiller days, the gray head had bowed in a *mea culpa*. In the years dead and gone he had prayed so devoutly—he had prayed so long.



The Old Priest of

“Make me forget, O my Heavenly Father—make me forget.”

It was a prayer wholly selfish. The divine fire of self-abnegation for the good of his fellow-mortals was not breathed ever so faintly on his mortal lips. It was a prayer for self, and self alone.

“I know, O my Heavenly Father, how powerless my poor frail body is to do good to any human creature, how incapable my reason of thinking out any good for the brothers of my race. I have no desire but for solitude and prayer. All I ask is that my poor ineffectual light may be hidden in loneliness until in thy mercy thou seest fit to take it from me.”

Hour after hour he knelt at the feet of the Crucified. He called out with all the strength of his feeble voice and the fervor of his weakened body for that consolation which his religion seemed powerless to give, and hour after hour he

San Francisco de la Espada

endured that torture which comes to one who seeks with all his soul, but unsuccessfully, the secret of renunciation.

In a corner of the garden, on a rough wooden bench, stood a row of potted plants. They were beginning to blossom, for it was the season for flowers. Bending over them with solicitous care was the gaunt figure of the priest. His rosary hung at his waist. On the end of the bench lay a little volume of Latin prayers.

Father Gilot was old—so old that his shoulders drooped pitifully under the weight of his black robe, frayed and worn. His hands trembled as much from long, sterile vigils and severe fasts as from the flight of advancing years, which had touched to silver his long thin hair.

It was toward the close of a young spring day. The fresh verdure of the flower-laden air, the blue of the sky, the singing and mating of birds, seemed to

The Old Priest of

mock at him in his old age and loneliness. Suddenly he bent over the tender green in one of the pots. A tiny blossom was budding forth. It was the color of God's skies in the sunlight—the color, too, of fair women's eyes—her eyes—the eyes of his heart's desire.

With a savage impulse, almost cruelly inhuman, Father Gilot dashed the pot and plant far beyond the garden wall.

"It grew there to tempt me!" he cried, wildly throwing out his arms and looking up into the cloud-filled sky. "It is an injustice of the God to whom I give my life in prayer."

In a moment he was subdued, cowed by the blasphemy of his words. He sank to his knees on the bare stones and bowed his head in abject humiliation, and beat his breast for finding it in his heart to question the righteous wisdom of his God.

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For some time he prayed. The sunlight mellowed and its reflected gold touched with a warm caress the cold gray walls of the church. The priest's solitude was unexpectedly broken. There was the sound of a woman's light laugh, followed by an exclamation of surprise. It jarred on the quiet evening air—it struck a discordant note, in a place where laughter dared not enter.

After the first moment of surprise Father Gilot rose to his feet, the rosary dropping from his hands, an angry flush burning deep in each sunken cheek.

"Woman, how dare you to come to rob me of my peace?" The man's voice, though raised to a high pitch, was as hollow and toneless as the bells hanging



The Old Priest of

in the arches of crumbling stone. The figure framed in the doorway of the sacristy trembled like a leaf in the wind. Her delicately featured face was instantly suffused with color.

"Oh! I am so sorry," she faltered, "so very sorry to have disturbed you. I did not know one should not come here. The door was open and we could find no one to show us about."

She stood for a moment a fair apparition in the light of the waning day, then turned and disappeared as quickly as she had come, leaving the atmosphere tainted faintly with the odor of a subtle, seductive perfume.

Father Gilot started forward with outstretched hands, a cry on his lips—

"Helen!"

Checking himself suddenly he covered his face with his hands and staggered like one drunk with wine.

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"Christ! her hair, and eyes—I can see nothing but her eyes—her eyes—always her eyes. God, they have burned into my brain!"

A terrible sob broke from the man's throat. He fell shaking to his knees. With a quick, vigorous movement he threw his head back and looked up into the blue vault of heaven. "Is it permitted that the dead so mock at the living?"

He lifted his arms in supplication.

"My God, how long must this torture rack my brain?" Incoherent words flowed as a swollen stream flows to an outlet in the sea.

For the first time in all his years of silent grief Father Gilot gave way unreservedly—unreservedly he bared his soul.

A sudden wind had come back out of the west. Fierce angry clouds obscured

The Old Priest of

the golden haze of the setting sun. Great drops of rain splashed down on the stones about the kneeling priest. These increased with the wind to a downpour.

Father Gilot staggered to his feet and felt his way to the door of the sacristy. His progress was arrested. His thin slipped foot trod upon something. He stooped and in the uncertain light saw it was a knot of ribbon—a knot of blue ribbon. “How came it here?” He breathed the words softly to himself. He held the ribbon in his hands. During the space of uncounted moments, the white-haired priest stood immovable; then he went into his bare little living room. At its threshold he crossed himself;

“Just this once, my Heavenly Father—just this once. This day Thou didst tempt me too sorely.”



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He entered the bare little room with its meagre monastic furnishings and took from a drawer a small box. Carefully he unlocked and opened it. Inside lay a knot of faded blue ribbon. With a start he looked first at the ribbon in his hand, then at that in the box, resting as he had last placed it in the years of his youth. Suddenly a look of exultation spread over his pale wrinkled face.

“If the dead can so come back, then I will find her.”

Passion, like a demon, strong, unconquerable, took quick possession of the man. He rushed forward and swung open the door. The rain beat into his face as he staggered out into the black storm-racked night, following the light of a woman's face and calling over and over again her name.

“Helen! Helen! I am seeking you—can you not hear my voice? Come back to

The Old Priest of

me—come back. O Lord, have mercy—
have mercy. Let her come back to me
only for a moment—only for a moment.
Let her come back so that I may touch
with my living hands her living body.”
A quick gush of wind rushed by and his
voice was lost in the night.



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Through the tall wet grasses, under the dripping trees, down by the rushing stream he sought her all through the long wild night,—unheedful that his churchman's robe was wet, torn and mud-stained.

In the chill of the dawn he crept back into the dark church and sank abjectly at the foot of the cross. His pallid lips tried to frame the words of a prayer, but no sound disturbed the deathlike stillness inside the chapel. Out in the mist-filled morning, a mad, gay carol was pouring from the throbbing throats of the mocking-birds.

The violent shivering of the priest's frail body gradually ceased. His face was upturned to the figure of the suffering Saviour, but the look of hope had faded from his eyes, and in its place was the symbol of the Crucified. When the day broke, bright and clear, a shaft of

The Old Priest

sunlight glancing through one of the chapel windows fell full on his white head.

And though Father Gilot died wearing the cassock of one whose life was consecrated to God, and with a prayer in his soul, he clasped in his hand a knot of blue ribbon, and in his heart was enshrined the image of a woman's face.

TOMMY HUNTRESS

TOMMY HUNTRESS

IF Tommy Huntress's eyes had not been of such a deep brown, or their expression less soulful, and if his hair, with its straight white parting, way over on the left side, had not been so jet black, nor his cheeks and his lips so red, perhaps he might have led his secluded life without interruption.

I don't mean by this description of Tommy Huntress's personal pulchritude to imply that he was effeminate. On the contrary, his figure, his manly dignity, and his strength of character proved him otherwise. He stood six feet two without his shoes, his shoulders were



Tommy Huntress

broad and square, and he had proved his physical prowess at the Academy when but a stripling.

But that there was something radically wrong with Tommy Huntress was a fact settled beyond peradventure of a doubt by the board of regulators at the post. Since his arrival among them all the girls at the post had smiled their sweetest to no avail. Even the wiles of the married women had failed utterly.

It was finally settled by the commanding officer's wife. She had announced it at a woman's luncheon: "Tommy Huntress is in love."

This statement, of course, occasioned a coolness on the part of the girls towards the dignified captain, and an ardent attempt on the part of the married women to sympathize with him.

The general verdict among the men was that the report was a "damned slander.

Tommy Huntress

Because a man shunned women and was quiet was no reason to believe that he was in love."

Tommy Huntress, of course, was not aware that he was the subject of garrison gossip and speculation, or that his mode of living had won for him the title of "the hermit of the post," but even had he known, it would not have made the slightest difference in his manner or habits. He confided in no one. The sorrow and disappointment of his life was his own secret. He could have found no consolation in its telling.

His days he devoted to the strict discharge of his duties—his nights were his own, and it was then that he suffered most. It was then that he ceased the battle with self—the fight of the daylight hours to beat down a sorrow that was almost unbearable. But in the solitude of the night hours he allowed this grief



Tommy Huntress

to engulf and absorb him. He paced the floor of his lonely bachelor quarters until sheer fatigue forced him to bed. Even there his empty arms reached out in his sleep.

One day Tommy heard a piece of news that caused his heart to throb fiercely and set his blood all a-tingle.

The commanding officer of the garrison had asked for sick leave and General Wilson had been ordered to Fort Sam Houston to fill the temporary vacancy. This information was published in the *Army and Navy Journal*, and what made it of particular importance and interest to Tommy was the publication in another part of the *Journal* of an announcement of the engagement of the new commanding officer and Miss Griswold. They were to be married sometime during the coming winter.

"Of course," added the kind individual

Tommy Huntress

who read the news to Tommy, "you have heard of Miss Helen Griswold; she is a daughter of General Griswold, and one of the most beautiful women in the army."

Yes, Tommy had heard of her. He left the man as quickly as he could and, going to his quarters, he despatched a letter to the War Department at Washington asking that he be relieved at once.

Like a caged lion he paced the confines of his small sitting-room.

"God!" he cried, "what wantons some respectable women are at heart. I'll be damned if I'll serve under the man she is going to marry."

There was no sleep or rest for Tommy Huntress that night, nor for many nights that followed.

The hop-room in the quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston was beautifully illuminated with myriads of soft lights. The

Tommy Huntress

walls and ceiling were hidden by great boughs of wild laurel, giving the effect of a woodland scene. Huge banners of stars and stripes hung against the dark green foliage.

The Twenty-Sixth Infantry Band was playing the Alamo March, composed by their leader, Cæsar Torsiello. The officers in their spotless white uniforms and the girls in their soft gowns made a picture of gaiety and beauty. It was Tommy Huntress's initial appearance at a dance at the post. That he should be there created a sensation.

Tommy had not come out of inclination or a desire to be there. His name had been put down on the committee on floor arrangements and at the mess that day, when he had announced that he was not going to attend the dance, his brother officers resented so furiously his disregard of social duties that Tommy decided that

Tommy Huntress

he must make the effort this one time and go.

He tried not to look bored and even made an effort to seem pleased at the cordial reception given him by the army people. Indeed the welcome he received made him feel as though he had just returned from a foreign war.

Tommy Huntress was not dancing. He was standing near the entrance to the room, watching with unseeing eyes the scene before him. The cotillion was just starting. One of the officers stood near him and Tommy answered in a desultory way the questions of the other man. Suddenly through the brilliantly lighted room came a quick exclamation of genuine admiration which caused even the indifferent Tommy to turn and look at the object that called it forth.

His jaws set themselves firmly together and his breath came quick and fast. It

Tommy Huntress

hurt him even more than he had imagined it would if he ever saw her again.

She was very beautiful in her soft, white, clinging dress as she stood framed in the doorway. Suddenly her eyes, as if drawn by a magnet, turned their gaze to those of Tommy.

Even under the glare of the lamps her face seemed to grow intensely white. In that first instant of sudden, unexpected meeting they forgot resentment, and in answer to the starved, hungry look in the man's face the woman would have rushed to him, but she saw that as quickly as the look came it had gone, and the man's expression spoke a curse.

Before either could realize it, she was whisked away in the figure of the dance, and as Tommy, still dazed, turned to leave the hop-room, a hand was placed on his arm and the voice of one of the officers' wives was insisting teasingly that

Tommy Huntress

he allow her the privilege of favoring him. With at least an appearance of gallantry he took the diminutive flag from her and for the first time in two years Tommy Huntress was dancing. At the sound of the leader's whistle, the women placed themselves behind a long screen at one end of the room and a row of hands appeared above its top. At a second signal the men rushed forward and took captive the dainty hands.

Each unseen maiden was led forth by her unseen captor. The hand Tommy Huntress held was small, adorably dainty, but its shape and beauty, until the identity of its owner was revealed to him, was lost, and then the blood turned to fire in his veins.

For the space of a second they stood looking at each other, neither speaking. Then Tommy, still holding the slender hand, led his partner through the dancers

Tommy Huntress

and out into the moon-filled night. When the two had reached the end of the walk in the quadrangle enclosure Tommy spoke. His voice was unsteady and a little harsh:

“Why, in God’s name, have you treated me in this way, Helen?”

“Treated you in what way?”—a sob caught her breath and she looked at the man with wide eyes.

“Why did you tell me you loved me?”—the man’s voice was stern. “Why did you tell me when I was suddenly

ordered to the
Philippines that
you would fol-
low me and
marry me there?
Why did you let
me go away with
the memory of
your kisses still



Tommy Huntress

warm on my lips, and the dream of happiness to come that was a heaven—why, oh, why did you do it?”

Tommy's voice broke and he closed his eyes and clinched his hands, choking down a sob that was well-nigh suffocating him. Slowly he opened his eyes and looked up into the great round moon, which shed its silver rays about them.

“God!”—the words came through shut teeth—“happiness! A thing as intangible as a dream that disappears like a phantom in the pathway of the moon!” With a quick gesture he held out his hands to her.

“Why did you go back on every promise you made me—why did you take away from me my contentment and make my life a hell?”

“Captain Huntress, you shall not talk to me like this. Every word you have said about me is absolutely untrue!”

Tommy Huntress

The girl's vehemence surprised even herself.

"I had not broken one promise I made to you until you, yourself, through your indifference and neglect, forced me, out of self-respect and what pride I had, to give you up. I was honest with you when I said I loved you, and you know it." The eyes that looked up into his were honest, truthful.



"I went to the Philippines, and you knew that too, but did not make it convenient to leave your regiment and come to Manila, where I had asked you to meet me. You did not even have the consideration to answer the letter I sent you from Manila begging you to come to me."

There was a quick exclamation from the man:

Tommy Huntress

"You wrote to me? You came to Manila?" The questions were demanded in a tone of genuine amazement. "Helen, I swear to you that I never knew it until now."

The girl moved nearer to him.

"You mean to say you did not get my letters—one telling you I was going to Manila, or the one sent you from there?"

Tommy Huntress had taken the girl in his arms and was looking down into her eyes.

"And you were true to me, Helen? It is too good to believe."

With her soul in her eyes the girl spoke:

"You still love me, Tommy?"

With a groan he caught her to him.

"Love you—my darling, I am mad for you. I want you every minute of my life. I cannot bear that another man should even look at you."

Tommy Huntress

His lips were very near hers, but he drew back quickly, releasing his hold of her. His figure was drawn up in a soldierly attitude, rigid, stiff.

"Pardon me for my presumption—you are engaged to General Wilson, our new commanding officer. I wish you all the happiness of life. You will not be annoyed by my presence here, for I have already asked to be relieved. Come, we will go back to the hop-room."

"Tommy, you won't leave me like this, will you?" The girl's arms were held out entreatingly. "Let me at least explain to you—Tommy, please wait and listen to me!"

The man stopped, but did not turn toward her.

The girl hesitated some moments as if searching for words to tell her story. Before she began she laid a hand gently on the man's arm.

Tommy Huntress

"You know, Tommy, after I had written you those letters and had gone to the Philippines to—to marry you and you did not even come to see me or write once, I tried to harden my heart against you." She paused, her hand against her lips to keep back a sob. If the man had looked at her he would have seen the tears in her eyes.

"I tried to make myself feel, Tommy, that if you did not love me I did not love you." Both the girl's hands were now clutching the man's arm.

"I could n't, Tommy, I could n't. I loved you even when General Wilson asked me to marry him and I said I would."

With a quick, impatient gesture the man threw off the girl's hands. She gave a little, low cry.

"Ah, Tommy, can't you understand how much easier it is to do the things

Tommy Huntress

we are forced into doing than to fight against them?" There was a sudden quickening in the girl's voice.

"Remember, Tommy, my father's and General Wilson's friendship dated from the war. It was the desire of my father's heart to see me married to him. With his insistency, General Wilson's pleading, and your indifference, I yielded." There was a tremor in her voice and tears in her eyes as she spoke.

"Do you blame me so much, Tommy, for what I have done?"

For some seconds the man covered his eyes with his hands, then he took the girl again in his arms.

"You don't love General Wilson?" There was a pathetic little note in the voice that answered his question:

"I don't love anybody but you, Tommy."

The next moment her face was buried

Tommy Huntress

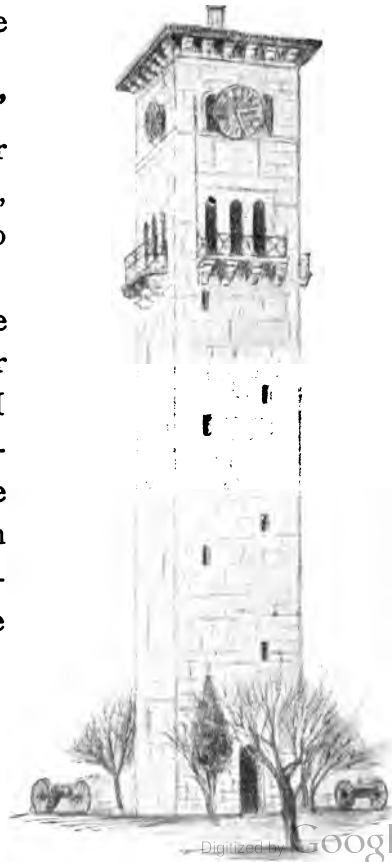
on his shoulder and he was whispering into her ear.

"Then before God you sha'n't marry any one but me." She drew away from him.

"Tommy, would you like the girl you love to be accused by a man of unfaithfulness—the way you have accused me to-night?"

"Ah, sweetheart," he begged, holding her close to him again, "don't be cruel to me."

"A woman can be both cruel and tender when she loves as I do, Tommy, and remember you deserve just a little harsh treatment for trusting the mail service



Tommy Huntress

more than you trusted me—now don't you, dear?"

Tommy's answer was so close to her lips that she could not quite make out the meaning of the words. When he allowed her to speak, she said:

"Yes, Tommy, we will be married at once." Then, in answer to his protest:

"Never mind, the General is old, and consequently sensible." She took his face in her hands and looked at him long and searchingly—the light of the moon was bright and clear.

"Tommy—" a long pause, filled in with ardent, fervid kisses—"Tommy," she pleaded. "You are not going to take me to some little, out-of-the-way post, are you? Fort Sam Houston is so beautiful and so attractive, and I want to stay here with you."

For some long seconds Tommy silenced the small mouth, while the strains of

Tommy Huntress

Torseillo's heavenly dance floated out to them from the hop-room.

"Let's stay here, Tommy!" The voice was filled with allurements.

"But don't you see, my sweetheart, that we can't?"

"No, I don't see why we can't." The girl spoke with her head against his shoulder. Tommy Huntress for the second time took her face in his hands and looked down into her dark eyes.

"My sweetheart, don't you understand that if I could not serve under a man who was going to marry you, I would not serve under a man whose *fiancée* I had stolen?"

"Kiss me," the girl breathed, her mouth close to his.

And the Texas moon smiled down upon them out of pure wantonness.

PHILLIPA, THE CHILI QUEEN

PHILLIPA, THE CHILI QUEEN

ALL of a sudden his blood went hot like fire.

The man's eyes had for the space of a second met those of the Chili Queen.

Phillipa's dark and wonderful orbs had often lured and held men, and not entirely for the sake of the peppery *chili con carne* and indigestible *enchiladas* which it was her nightly business to serve to customers.

Her latest victim, Jack Talcott, seated himself at the long, narrow table and across its white-covered surface his eyes followed the lithe, graceful figure of



Phillipa,

the Mexican girl. There were others in the small quadrangle formed by the narrow tables, who were just as busy as Phillipa—perhaps more so, because part of Phillipa's business was to be agreeable. The owners of the stand had learned the value of the girl's beauty, and paid her extra money for enticing customers; and that is why, as they bent over the pots of pepper and garlic-seasoned food, they failed to notice the rapt, almost devouring gaze the good-looking American bestowed upon Phillipa.

For three nights Jack Talcott had been cruelly and wantonly careless of his digestive organs. The effects of Mexican dishes, if one fancies them as an occasional indulgence, are not irremediable, but as a night-after-night diet they are strictly to be avoided. It was not, however, altogether physically that Talcott suffered. Just three nights had Talcott

The Chili Queen

been in San Antonio, and these three nights he had spent at the Chili Queen's side—ever since that first evening of his arrival from New York, when he had stood in front of the hotel, and been attracted by the twinkling lights of the Mexican *chili* stands on the other side of the plaza.

It was a warm night with the sky black and starless. The leaves of the great palms in the plaza were stirred by the



Phillipa,

soft winds creeping up from the southern sea.

The thermometer, when Talcott left New York, registered several degrees below the freezing point. Snow three inches deep covered the surface of the earth, and it had been a bleak and monotonous landscape that met his tired gaze on his southern flight. The contrast of the warmth of this western Texas atmosphere soothed and delighted him. The lights from the *chili* stands gleamed like fireflies through the tropical night.

It was out of curiosity, at first, that he walked over for a nearer inspection of the dark-skinned people serving the food of their country. As he approached the table some one spoke to him:

"The Señor wishes *tamales*, *chili con carne*, *tortillas*—there are some fine *enchiladas* to-night. I made them myself."

The Chili Queen

Did a laugh follow the words? Talcott thought it did, for her head was tossed back and a smile just parted the red lips. Her full, long throat, a temptation in itself, was set off by a low bodice of vivid red. Held daintily between her fingers was a corn-shuck *cigarro*. Under the spell of her eyes the man felt a peculiar thrill.

Again there was the same low, seductive laugh, like the murmur of a soft breeze. Quickly the slender figure turned, and as quickly laid before the American a plate of steaming viands.

"Will the Señor not sit down?"

Talcott sank into the indicated chair. He watched the small, shapely hands and smooth brown arms as she deftly arranged the Mexican dishes in front of him, but longer he watched the face, with its rich red lips and oval contour, the hair like polished jet, and the eyes, from which

Phillipa,

shone the childlike innocence of a saint, belying the mouth, which was that of a sinner.

If one of Talcott's friends had suddenly tapped him on the shoulder and called him to time, the young fellow would have seen and realized the folly of his ways; but he was in a far-away country, his identity was unknown, the environment free—easy for a stranger. And the Chili Queen was so deliciously quaint, petite, and alluring.

So it went, night after night finding the young Northerner by the Mexican *muchacha's* side, until one evening the girl's careless laugh ended suddenly, and her slender frame winced as if the flesh had felt a physical hurt.

Each moment, when not busy serving customers, Phillipa had been talking to the American. For the first time in her life the Chili Queen's heart had been

The Chili Queen

really touched. Her love spoke in her eyes and Talcott began to feel potently its alluring charm. Her coquetry and flashing smiles forced the man to a more passionate wooing.

"Are you tired, Phillipa, of this life?"

There was a pretty shrug of the girl's shoulders and a coy hesitancy.

"No—o, meb'y not, Señor. ——I know no other. Why?"

The girl leaned across the table, her face close to his, and there was that in it which drove him mad.

"If I asked you to leave all this and come with me?" He laid his hand on hers. The girl closed her eyes for a second and



Phillipa,

drew in a long, deep breath. When she opened them it was not necessary for her to speak. Talcott read in their depths his answer and his hand closed tighter about hers.

At that moment a sudden, quick look flashed into her face. Fleeting though it was, to the two men who saw it the impression which it left was unpleasant. Quickly Phillipa released her hand and drew it across her eyes. She laughed suddenly, hysterically.

"Como estas,—how are you, Benito?"

The words were forced from between lips rigid and drawn, and Talcott noticed that her entire body was shaking as if with the cold.

There was an answer in a deep, harsh voice from some one standing close beside him. Talcott turned and looked at the man. He met the steady gaze of a dark-skinned Mexican whose whole figure was

The Chili Queen

frightfully thin, and whose face was drawn and cadaverous.

Phillipa was called to the other side of the table, and with a vindictive grunt the Mexican followed her.

"Who is the gringo, Phillipa." He leered at the girl as he spoke. "Same kind as the other American dog?"

For a moment the girl's eyes flashed. "Don't you dare to speak of him, you villain—you murderer!"

"Phillipa," called the shrill voice of an old woman bending over the steaming pots, "some one is calling for you."

The Chili Queen turned, but she was held back by the fierce detaining hand of the Mexican.

"That's right," he hissed, "murderer, and whose fault was it?"

The grip on the girl's arm tightened; she could have screamed with the pain of it.

Phillipa,

"Whose fault was it, I say?" He pulled her around so that she faced him. His eyes blazed into hers.

"*Yours*," he choked, "*yours*. The penitentiary is nothing—five years of it has n't made me sorry. A man would do murder twice over and let his soul follow him to hell for such as you."

Again the old woman's voice called impatiently, "Phillipa, Phillipa, will you come?"

"Tell her you will come," the man said harshly, but the frightened girl could not speak. "*Orita*, in a little while," he called out to the woman.

"Tell me you will send that man away," he continued, turning to the girl, "and I will not hurt him—go on, be quick about it—you will?"

Phillipa gasped through trembling lips her answer, "Yes." The man drew a breath of relief.

The Chili Queen

"Then go over to him now while I watch you and tell him—do you understand, *now!*"

Phillipa nodded her head. She moved a little unsteadily. The gay, happy, careless Phillipa had died, as a flower withers in the hot sun.

Benito, the Mexican, took from his pocket a corn shuck, and slowly and carefully rolled himself a cigarette. His cone-crowned sombrero was pulled well down over his face, but from under its wide brim he followed the girl's movements with evil eyes.

Talcott had watched this scene with a feeling of uneasiness, and when the girl, white and panting, staggered over to him, he asked sharply:

"Phillipa, who is



Phillipa,

that man and what right has he to treat you so?"

The girl answered hurriedly:

"Meet me, Señor, at daybreak, on the south side of the Alamo. I will explain it all." She leaned nearer to him, her voice sank to a whisper. "Don't stay here now, he is watching us; you asked me to go with you—I will go." She turned quickly and began to wait on customers.

Across the tables with their dim oil lamps Talcott saw the eyes of the Mexican still watching him. Though the night's proceedings had somewhat awakened him from his foolish infatuation, the girl's vibrant appeal still rang in his ears as he stumbled over the uneven pavements of the narrow streets. It was two hours until daylight and Talcott knew it was useless to go to his room at the hotel—he could not sleep. When the

The Chili Queen

faint light of dawn crept over the sleeping city the man turned his steps in the direction of the Alamo.

The people at the *chili* stands were carefully putting away their belongings—the business for the night was over.

As Talcott approached the old chapel he saw the figure of Phillipa enveloped in her *mantilla*. The hitherto radiant Chili Queen appeared humble, subdued. As he approached she looked about cautiously in the uncertain light, then rushed toward him with an appealing gesture.

“Ah, Señor, did you mean what you said—that you would take me away? I have prayed to the Holy Virgin that you did.”

Her voice and eyes were filled with tears.

“Tell me first, Phillipa”—Talcott

Phillipa,

spoke calmly—"who was the Mexican who talked with you last night?"

With a quick movement Phillipa freed her head from its black covering. The blood red of the rose nestling in her black hair stood out in aggressive contrast to the pallor of her face.

"He is a man I hate, Señor, and he loves me and wants me to marry him; but I will go with you, Señor, I will go with you, for I love you with all my soul." The girl's eyes looked the passion that filled her voice.

Talcott was both sorry and angry for the predicament in which he was placed,—angry with himself, sorry for the girl.

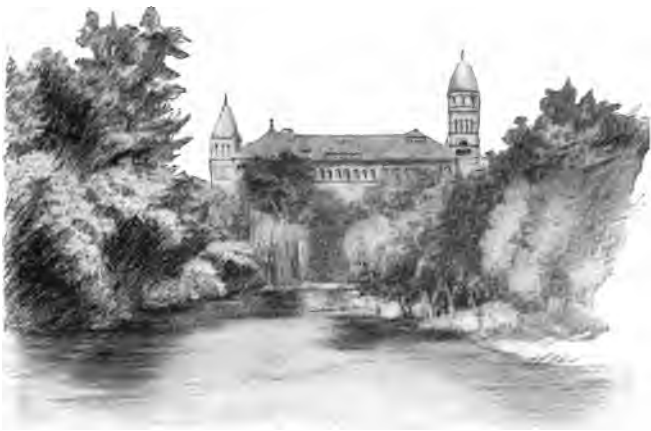
There was only one thing for him to do,—keep faith with Phillipa. He was just about to speak when the sound of a voice came abruptly from out of the shadows:

"Only part of that is true, Señor

The Chili Queen

Americano." The voice was close to them. Phillipa gave a little cry and clung to Talcott. The dark figure of the Mexican advanced from the shadows and confronted the two.

"Phillipa says she does not love me—that is a lie, because she does. I killed one American because he came between us, and I am only just out of jail for it. I come back to Phillipa and find you here. You have been making love to her—she has thought she loved you and would go away with you. What she



Phillipa, the Chili Queen

shall do is to come with me. I am one of her own race. I have loved her long and I will always love her and she shall love me. You do not love her, Señor, and if you try to take her from me I will kill you as I killed the other gringo. Now go and leave us alone." He held out his hand:

"Come, Phillipa."

The girl looked at Talcott, then at the Mexican. Slowly she left the American's side. The Mexican's power over her was supreme. He took her trembling hand in his and led her away.

"*Adios*, Señor," he called to Talcott, "*Adios*."

THE RED ROSE OF SAN JOSÉ

THE RED ROSE OF SAN JOSÉ¹

I

FAR out across the undulating prairie
the notes of the angelus fell clear
and sweet on the quiet evening air.

A bare-footed Franciscan monk and a Spanish soldier stopped in their weary, halting journey and reverently crossed themselves. Save for the mellow tones of the monastery bell, no sound disturbed the stillness of the declining day. As the last stroke died in a faint echo, and the plains were wrapped in silence, these two, standing with bowed heads in prayerful meditation, were symbolic

¹ Mission established 1718.



The Red Rose

of the times when the soldier and the priest went hand in hand into the wilderness of a new-found world, the one, patient even unto martyrdom, to plant the cross; the other to defend it with martial valor.

The setting sun fell full on the two figures, lighting up the brilliant uniform of the soldier, and touching into silver the white hair of the gray-habited friar. About them lay the vast expanse of prairie land, covered with tall waving grass and gay with the varying colors of the wild flowers. The breeze blowing soft across the plains, was heavy with the odor of spring blossoms, and its freshness cooled the hot, dust-covered faces of the travellers.

Again crossing themselves, the travellers resumed their journey in the direction of a white belfry tower which rose above the tops of a tall line of trees,

Of San José

crowned with a gilded cross, now touched red by the glow of the setting sun. The bent figure of the aged, bare-footed friar contrasted strangely with the youthful form of the soldier, and the coarse woollen robe worn by the monk looked poor and shabby in comparison with the martial accoutrements of the younger man. A sword hung in its glittering scabbard from the side of the soldier, ever ready to leap forth in quick defence or attack, but the churchman was unarmed. His only weapon was the one which he turned against himself. Half hidden in the folds of his plain rough gown it dangled—a knotted hempen cord, the scourge with which he chastised himself for his sins and transgressions, by inflicting blows on his naked shoulders.

There was yet a good stretch of country between them and the Mission which lay on the farther side of the stream,

The Red Rose

and the young soldier gave vent to a half-suppressed sigh of pain as he measured the distance with his eye. Many a weary mile these two had travelled since leaving Mexico, although their journey had not been started together.

Both were footsore and weary. The wound in the soldier's side had reopened and the blood oozing forth had stained his red coat to a deeper hue, and where it fell to the ground it dyed crimson the delicate pinks and yellows of the field flowers. The soldier was weak and faint from loss of blood and from hunger, but as he felt the trembling in the aged body under his arm, which was circled about the stooped shoulders of the monk, a feeling of fierce protest rose within him, that he, the strong, should be forced to lean on the weak, and he strove to lean less heavily on his companion.

Of San José

When they reached the tall line of timber edging the bank of the river, the monk paused and allowed the form of the soldier to slip down gently to the bank. He then removed his sandals, and waded out into the clear, limpid water of the slowly moving current. While Fray Antonio was bending over wetting his coarse cotton handkerchief in the water, something stirred ever so little in one of the trees near where the soldier lay. With the stealth of a cat a slight brown figure slipped down from the bed of leaves and moss where it had been concealed, and, edging its way noiselessly along, stopped behind the trunk of a large oak and, peering around cautiously, looked with wide, wondering eyes into the pale fair face of the boy.

It was a girl, slender and straight as a sapling, her skin brown as the nuts that fall in the autumn, and her long

The Red Rose

straight hair, which fell in a mass about her shoulders, was the color of the raven's wing.

The soldier's eyes were closed so that she could not see their deep clear blue, so different from her own, which were as dark and mysterious as the depths of a forest at midnight.

It was only a short time that she gazed, but in that time her breath came and went quickly and a deeper color surged up under her skin and her lips parted in a half-suppressed exclamation. Quickly and soundlessly as she had come the girl disappeared.

Fray Antonio was returning with the wet handkerchief, with which he bathed the face and parched lips of the soldier. His tender solicitude for the wounded man was that of a woman. Looking up the length of the stream he discovered a crude foot-bridge made of a fallen log,

Of San José

and with some difficulty succeeded in getting the soldier to the other side, where they found themselves in a tangle of brush. They had not gone many steps through this maze of mesquite and chaparral when the monk's eye was attracted by a bright patch of color in the grayish thicket. At first he thought it might be a red bird and he expected to see it disappear at his approach, but as he neared it the flaming speck still remained motionless. When he came



The Red Rose

up to the bush he was surprised to find a strip of vividly dyed cotton. Taking the bit of cloth from its thorny fastenings, Fray Antonio examined it carefully. In those days signs meant all things, so he slipped it into the pocket of his robe and returned to the soldier. Again he assisted the wounded man forward toward the church. The brush was so thick that all sight of the Mission had been hidden until they suddenly found themselves on its outskirts and within a stone's throw of a low stone wall that encircled the grounds of the monastery.

"At last, my son, the journey is over," the monk said, pointing to the church, and turning to the soldier, he saw the look of wonder and admiration that had come into his face at sight of it.

Bathed in the soft light of the fading day the fortress church of San José de Aguayo rose tall and stately amid its

Of San José

verdant growth of orchards and gardens. Sixty years before, its foundation stones had been laid. Its founder was the great Catholic apostle, Fray Don Antonio Margil de Jesus, who died before his great work was completed. Fray Antonio had been in the City of Mexico at the time of his funeral and had witnessed the heart-felt sorrow of the people at the loss of their beloved leader. Fray Margil had been likened to Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order. Like him, they said, he could tame the wild beasts, and his eloquence was such that it could reach and soften the hearts of the cruelest of savage tribes.

As the two men stood looking at the Mission, the heart of the monk became filled with sadness and an involuntary sigh escaped his thin, drawn lips. Though all looked serene around the church

The Red Rose

settlement, how long would it remain so? His troubled fancy seemed to discern a cloud, small and menacing, hovering over the peace and quiet of these houses of God.

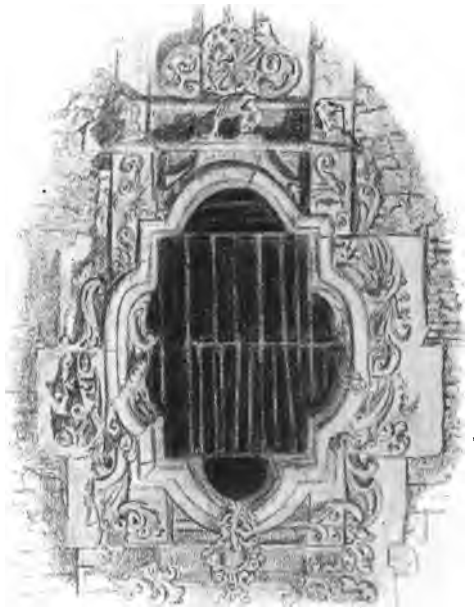
It was almost as if prophetically he foresaw the downfall of these Missions, built with the heart's blood of his order. How long would this church of the wilderness call to her the savages of this great untamed land? How long would the gardens bloom with fragrance and color, and the fruit-trees thrive and bear? Would its fate be a repetition of that of the San Saba Mission, which twenty-two years before had been destroyed by the savage Comanche, who cruelly put to death all inside its wall? Did not such a fate probably hang over all the Missions?

"Ah!" he sighed. "How long, how long?"

Of San José

Then remembering, in the midst of his sad reflections, the mysterious piece of blood-stained cotton, and remembering too that his companion was in sore need of food and care, he started toward the main entrance of the monastery grounds. When they entered, the Indians were slowly filing out of the chapel and filling the great plaza to the right of the church. They stared deliberately at the two, and gazed with wonder in their eyes as had the girl by the arroyo at the fair soldier.

It was the hour for the evening meal, and when the dust-covered travellers entered the refectory the brothers rose and, after the



The Red Rose

Abbot's blessing, greeted them affectionately.

The Abbot was the first to speak.

"Thou hast had a long journey, my son, but please the Heavenly Father through His grace thou hast come through it unharmed to add one more to my pious flock of the wilderness."

"Yes, Father," the priest answered, and then, remembering the piece of red cotton, he continued: "The greatest danger may lurk at the end of my journey, for I found this down by the river in the brush thicket. Its meaning I know not, but it is stained with blood." As he spoke he held out in his hand the bit of cotton. The movement threw back the loose sleeve of his frock, and while the monks started at its sight the Abbot glanced from the out-stretched hand holding the fateful omen to a deeper-dyed rag that bound the arm of

Of San José

the friar below the elbow. "While the omen of the dyed cotton you have brought, my son, bespeaks perilous times for us, what meaning has the one of the same color you carry on your arm?"

Fray Antonio looked down quickly at the wound referred to. "An arrow of an Indian did this, Father. If it had not been for this young soldier, who himself received the wound in the side in my defence, I would never have been with you to-night."

A wave of sympathy swept over the assembled monks, and at the Abbot's orders the boy was taken to one of the cells and tenderly cared for.

The monks sat down to their interrupted meal and Fray Antonio was next the Abbot. "Tell me, my son," said the Abbot, "something of your perilous journey to our resting-place."

After Fray Antonio had refreshed

The Red Rose

himself sufficiently with the meal of game, herbs, and fruit, he told of that trip fraught with so much peril and danger and of the moment when he had thought his journey had ended eternally and the young soldier had appeared to save him.

"But what of affairs in Spain?" continued the Abbot.

"So long ago does it seem to me since I left there that the news I can tell you will, I am afraid, be ancient," Fray Antonio answered. The Abbot sighed deeply.

"It is so seldom that news of any kind reaches us that yours will surely be welcome."

Fray Antonio shook his head sadly—"Our mother country Spain is in conflict with France."

The Abbot's brow contracted, and he looked out through the windows to the

Of San José

eastern sky, where lingered a dull reddish glow.

"And Mexico writhes under Spanish rule. How will it end?" He spoke almost as if to himself.

"And our Missions, Father?" Fray Antonio asked vehemently. "Our Missions—what will become of them? What good will have been accomplished?"

The Abbot raised his hand warningly. "Hush, my son. Such a question is not fit. The salvation of one unenlightened soul is with the toil of years and the sacrifice of the many. God's word is never wasted wherever it is preached."

For a time there was silence. Then Fray Antonio spoke.

"Father, tell me something of our Missions and the work of our holy order here in the new world?"

The Abbot raised his head and looked thoughtfully at the priest. "My son,

The Red Rose

the simple question you have asked me to relate is history. This monastery you are now in stands a noble and fitting



monument to our Church. It is a miracle. To-morrow you will see the results of our labors. There are still many Indian braves who defy—even threaten us. The piece of cotton you brought to us tells its story, but our work has counted for much good even if it has been at-

tended with death and suffering.”

“And now, Father, has all this bloodshed and martyrdom effected the civilization of this great territory?”

The Abbot shook his head.

Of San José

"Things wear a troubled look, my son. While the order of our Church has in a measure fulfilled its mission of civilizing the Indians, Spain is not so successful in the way she treats her colonies."

At that moment they were interrupted by the sound of a bell calling the monks to prayer. Slowly they filed into the little chapel and soon their voices chanting the words of the evening prayers rose in melodious harmony.

.

When Fray Antonio and the wounded soldier quitted the brush thicket there were two that followed close on their tracks, but each unaware of the other's presence.

One was the girl whose eyes had marvelled at the pale soldier; the other a tall, sinewy Indian, with keen scenting nostrils and an eye like that of an eagle.

The Red Rose

He was Tichimingo, son of a chief of the Comanches. He had sworn a mighty oath to the great Manitou that no gray-robed, pale-faced priest should ever force him to kneel before the image of another god, and that in time he would drive out the strangers who had come mysteriously in the night from an unknown land and had built their houses of worship in the garden of his wilderness.

It was he who had placed the dyed cotton on the thorny bush. It was he who had aroused the errant members of his tribe to join with him in the destruction of the Missions. But he would give the monks warning—ample warning.

The moon hung now in crescent. When its corners turned again in the sky-world, then it would be time. All of a sudden, as he stood there in the light, the gleam of hate died out in the

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Indian's eyes,—one of equal fierceness burned there instead.

He slipped quickly through the brush. He was almost upon the girl, when she turned, startled, then fled like a frightened deer before him.

“Run not so fast, Wild Dove of the Woods,” he called after her in the language of his race. “What Tichimingo desires he pursues, and what he pursues he catches, and Tichimingo desires thee.”

He laughed triumphantly as he followed hot upon her trail.

II

Now when Fray Antonio had helped up the soldier from the ground, something bright and shining fell unnoticed from the inside pocket of his unfastened jacket.

That night when the moonbeams

The Red Rose

played and danced with the shadows under the trees the rays fell on the little gold ornament.

There were other eyes in the woods that night as keen as those of its animal inhabitants, and when these eyes spied the glittering object, two little brown hands closed over it and hid it away.

From that day Paoli spent her time in the woods near the Mission. Never before had her wild little spirit been filled with such restlessness. She hid in the branches of the trees. She followed every sound in the brush, every whisper of the wind.

With each day this restlessness grew more fierce, and the desire to look again upon the fair-haired, blue-eyed stranger became more urgent, more impelling. She knew that when he got well enough he would come, for did not the gold trinket she always carried with her

Of San José

belong to him and would he not want to look for it? That he had been very ill Paoli learned from the Indians at the Mission.

She decked herself in all her finery of gay beads and feathers so that when he should come, if she chose to let him see her he would find her not unpleasing.

She had not decided whether she would herself hand him the trinket then or lay it on the ground where he could find it. For six days she waited and he did not come. For six days she watched, but her vigil was unrewarded. There was one, however, she did see. It was Tichimingo. When he was not hunting his game he was hunting her.

"Little Wild Dove of the Wood," he would say to



The Red Rose

her, "before many moons you will flutter into the arms of Tichimingo and there you will find shelter and protection."

When Paoli shook her head and looked at him angrily out of her great dark eyes, he would only laugh the louder.

"You will love me, little Paoli. You will love me much. It is always so with the things that fight the bravest against capture. But Tichimingo can wait. There is first something he must do, something he has sworn to do, and after that"—he held out his arms and moved nearer Paoli; but the girl was gone and only the crackling of the dried twigs told which path she had taken.

One day, when noon lay hot on the unsheltered prairies, Paoli curled herself in a cool shadow under a moss-covered oak and fell asleep.

Of San José

When she awoke it was not Tichimingo that was leaning close over her with a hungry light in his fierce eyes,—it was the boy soldier.

With the grace and quickness of a startled animal Paoli sprang to her feet, and for a second made as if to run; then she slipped her hand under her tunic and drew out the gold locket and held it out to the man.

With an exclamation of surprise and delight he took it from her, examined it a moment, pressed something, and it opened like a book and he put it to his lips and held it there a moment.

Paoli stood gazing in astonishment. She had often looked at and handled the little flat gold ornament, but it had never opened for her. Why did he kiss it, she wondered. It must be a relic from the church, she thought. He slipped it back into the pocket of

The Red Rose

his coat. "Thank you," he said to the girl in Spanish.

"I was afraid I had lost it far from here, at the time the arrow struck me and Fray Antonio unfastened my coat."

Speaking of this made him think of the Indian who had shot that arrow, and he looked at the girl with a new light in his blue eyes. She noted it at once.

"So it was one of my people who wounded you?"

Paoli's Spanish was very bad, but it could be understood.

"Yes, I have one of them to thank for that," he said reflectively.

"And what have we got to thank your people for?" she flashed back at him quickly. "I hate your pale-faced fathers in the Mission"—her eyes snapped with anger. "They want to make one work, work all the time with no play,

Of San José

and they are making women of our braves." There was deep scorn in her voice. "But there is one they cannot bend to their ways."

Paoli smiled triumphantly, and had Tichimingo seen it and known she had spoken in defence of him, his heart would have warmed happily under her praise.

The soldier was looking at the girl with wonder and admiration.

"I am too weak to stand long," he said. "Will you sit and talk with me a little?"

This daughter of the Comanche was very beautiful and the man felt loath to let her go.

They seated themselves on the soft moss-covered earth.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Paoli," she answered.

He looked at her with an added interest—"Wild Dove of the Woods."

The Red Rose

"How did you know?" And she turned her great fawn-like eyes full upon him.

"I have heard them speak of you at the Mission," he answered. "But they seem to think you are far away from here."

"It is well they think so," the girl said with a little savage tone in her voice.

"Why?" asked the man.

"They were not good to me," and the look of hate—the hate an Indian can alone feel—still marred her pretty face.

"What did they do to you?" he asked.

"They gave me a penance that I could not perform." The little lips set themselves together.

"And it was for this that you refused to go again to the Mission church and went back to the tribe?"

Of San José

"Yes—was I not right?" she asked vehemently. "They wanted to take away my hours of recreation and not let me go to the woods. Why, they even locked me in, but they could not keep me that way. One morning they found me gone. I have never been inside the Mission since."

"Then why are you here now?" the man asked suspiciously.

The Indian girl's eyes dilated and she took a deep breath through her slender nostrils, and her voice sank to a lower note.

"Because I wanted to be near where I could smell again the incense they burn in the chapel, and because I wanted to look once more on the beautiful image of the Virgin dressed in silk and jewels that stands on the altar. I thought perhaps some night when they were all asleep in the Mission I could go

The Red Rose

to the chapel without their seeing me."

In this speech Paoli had divulged the secret of the influence of the father over the Indian.

"What is your name?" the girl asked suddenly.

"Juan Delgado is my name," he said.

"You are a soldier?"

"Yes, of Spain."

The girl looked at him from under her heavy lashes.

"Why did you come?"

"I am going to San Antonio to join my company," he answered.

"Soon?"

"I cannot tell. When my wound is healed. The fathers will not let me leave sooner."

The bell of the Mission clanged out the hour of the mid-day meal, and the man arose.

Of San José

"Are you in the woods often?" he asked.

"Almost all the time. "

"Will you be here to-morrow at the noon hour?" The girl did not speak.

The man repeated his question. Finally she answered:

"I cannot tell"—she had the suspicion of her race.

"If I come will you be here?" he asked persuasively. And again Paoli answered:

"I cannot tell."

"But I will come anyway," the man said, "and if you are not here I shall be disappointed."

This time Paoli said nothing, but stood looking at him with an expression in her eyes which was difficult to understand.

The soldier turned and walked back to the Mission.

The Red Rose

III

Juan Delgado was in the woods at the noon hour the next day and many days following. Paoli was there too. They talked long together. The girl told him of the habits and customs of her tribe, and all the while he watched her with a growing interest.

He delighted to look at the changing expressions in the brown mobile face—to search to their depths the great dark eyes. He loved to watch the sun lose itself in the shadows of the black, lustrous hair. It thrilled him to note the soft, graceful undulations of the lithe, slender body untrammelled in its loose free dress. The little feet in the beaded moccasins he longed to take and press tightly in the palms of his hands. His Castilian blood ran hot and this Indian girl had stirred it into fire.

Of San José

One day when they had been talking together Juan said something which angered the girl. It was an allusion to her race. Quick as a flash she had risen and left him. He called after her many times, but Paoli did not come back.

The following day he came as usual, and a look of glad surprise flashed into his face at sight of her standing waiting for him.

"See what I have brought you, Paoli, from the Mission garden."

He held in his hand a red rose. "It is my peace offering, little Wild Dove of the Woods." Her eyes lighted with pleasure.

"It came from the great bush in the corner of the garden," she said. "The Indians call it the Rose of San José."



The Red Rose

He fastened the rose in one of the black braids just back of the little shell-like ear. In doing so his hand brushed very near the smooth round cheek, and Juan Delgado found himself fighting against a temptation that with each day grew more difficult of control.

"I shall keep it always—always," the girl said softly, putting up her hand and touching gently the fresh petals. "Unless," she added, looking up at him thoughtfully, "unless it ever happens I should have to send you a peace offering. If I did I would return to you the rose." Her eyes filled with a warm tenderness. "It would be a sad and faded little rose, but it would be like my heart if—if I ever hurt you."

Juan Delgado took both her little brown hands in his. A wave of color swept over Paoli's face and neck. She was looking down at the ground.

Of San José

"Look at me, Paoli." She raised her head slowly and looked at him. Juan Delgado started at what he saw written in the girl's face; his heart beat wildly, but he released her hands and turned away.

They were silent for some time. It was then that there was a noise ever so slight in the bush. The man did not even hear it, but the girl's quick trained ear detected it in an instant and she thought of Tichimingo.

IV

Heretofore it was only in the late evening and the night-time that he came, but then Tichimingo was cunning and one could not tell when he would come or go.

When Juan Delgado left her, Paoli searched through the woods along the

The Red Rose

stream for Tichimingo. She wanted to make sure.

She had almost given up the search when suddenly she came close upon him, bending over something on the ground. She stood hardly daring to breathe, and watched. She saw the Indian unsheath his knife and cut close to the heart of a young lynx he had taken from his pack of game. As the fresh blood spurted out of the wound he took a piece of cotton cloth and dipped it into the red fluid so that it took the color, and then he fastened it to a thorn bush.

At sight of this a great fear stole over Paoli and she understood for the first time the meaning of his words to her that day,—when he had said there was something he had sworn to do.

The next moment she was by his side. It was savage facing savage and the look in their eyes was not good to

Of San José

see. At his first sight of her the girl knew that she had not been mistaken in the sound in the bush—and she had not, for Tichimingo had crawled like a snake on the ground, dragging his brown body through the grass and underbrush until he had come quite close to the man and the girl. He had not understood the language of their lips, but an Indian reads things by signs and all the venom and hatred of his race rose at sight of these two together.

It is very probable that then and there he would have killed the soldier, but in two days' time a sweet revenge would come to him. When the Mission was taken, the torture he had planned for its inmates would include the soldier as well.

"It is the Mission you are going to destroy and the padres?" Paoli said, through her little white teeth.

The Red Rose

Tichimingo grunted sullenly and nodded.

"When?" the girl asked, and her little brown face went white of a sudden. It is the Indian's nature to answer when and as he pleases. But the Indian in the girl forced from the man a response.

"When the moon hangs in its first quarter."

"Two days more," the girl said slowly, as though the words hurt her.

"And the soldier will be left for me to kill."

Tichimingo made a step toward the girl and grunted so fiendishly that even she, accustomed as she was to the cruelty of her people, shrank away from him.

"I saw him look into your eyes to-day in a way no man shall ever look at you and live—and *you*, who are to belong to me, answered that look."

Paoli raised her head and stared at

Of San José

him a moment in defiance. She would have said something, but the man sprang at her viciously, the knife with which he had stabbed the wildcat still clasped in his hand, and the girl turned and ran from him.

Even so Tichimingo would have overtaken her, but his foot caught in the root of a shrub and he fell. Only a second was he delayed, but it was enough for the girl to escape beyond his reach, and the nearest he got to her that night was to hear the echo of a wood dove's cry, the sound of which lashed him to a fury.

V

"How soon will your wound be healed?" Paoli asked with terror and anxiety in her voice, that she could not control. She leaned anxiously toward Juan Delgado, waiting for his answer.

The Red Rose

Short as the time was, in her great impatience it seemed too long in coming.

"Will it be before—before the next new moon?" She leaned closer still. The man looked at her surprised.

"When is the time for the next new moon?" he answered, failing to comprehend the reason for her anxiety, "and what has that got to do with my going away?"

"I only wanted to know how much longer you would be here," she said, smiling so as to disarm his probable suspicion. An Indian always gauges the length of time by the moon. "You know the new moon will be in its first quarter in two days."

"Yes, I will be here until after that. I will be here until a danger that threatens the Mission is passed, Paoli, and we will see each other every day, will we not, Wild Dove of the Woods?"

Of San José

The girl did not answer, but gave a little gasp as if in pain, and said something the man could not understand.

Suddenly she leaned over and placed her hand on his arm. "You must go from the Mission," she said. "You must go before two days, before the moon turns its first quarter."

"Why?" the man asked in real alarm.

"The danger that threatens the Mission draws near," the girl said excitedly. "When it comes you must not be there."

"It is my duty to be there, Paoli—a soldier never runs from danger." But the girl clasped her little hands together in a gesture of agony.

"It would kill me to have anything happen to you."

.
That night Paoli sought Tichimingo. He was sullen and savage and it was a long time before he would listen or

The Red Rose

Speak to her. But he loved her, and Paoli was a woman that a man who was not her lover could not set aside.

"Tichimingo," she said to him softly, and she looked up into his face in a way he had never seen her look before. It set his blood on fire.

"Tichimingo, if I promise to marry you in the first quarter of the moon will you leave the Mission and the fathers in peace?"

He grunted, but it was a weak and un-Indian-like grunt, and his eyes showed how strong was the temptation. She repeated the request, and as she did so her soft young body crept nearer until he could feel the warm life of it next his own. His mask of Indian savagery fell from his face and his eyes were filled with a human passion, intense and entreating.

"In the first quarter of the moon, you

Of San José

said, little Wild Dove of the Woods?
Then the Mission shall stand and the
fathers go unharmed."

.

That night Paoli did not fly before
Tichimingo. When he pursued she waited.
In the darkness that comes before the
dawn they turned their faces from the
Mission toward the haunts of their tribe.

In the face of Tichimingo the brave
there shone a look of triumph such as
had never before been there, but the
Wild Dove of the Woods walked dejected-
edly. Her little wings and her heart were
broken.

.

That evening when Fray Antonio went
down to the stream he looked anxiously
into the thicket. As usual there was
something red attached to the bush.
He went up to it.

"Ave Maria! Mother of God!" The

The Red Rose

exclamation burst from his lips. What did this signify? He hurried back to the Mission and into the presence of the Abbot and brothers gathered for the evening meal. The anxious monks gathered around him.

"The signal, Fray Antonio," they cried in chorus.

"It is here." And Fray Antonio held in the palm of his hand a red rose—a Rose of San José. It lay withered and limp.



Juan Delgado, who was with the monks, started and turned pale. Something tightened about his heart and choked in his throat. He took the rose from the monk's hand.

Of San José

"It is all well for the Mission. The signal is one of peace."

The monks looked at him suspiciously and wonderingly. He answered the question in their eyes.

"The Indian girl Paoli, the one they call Wild Dove of the Woods, whom I met, told me if it was to be peace the offering would be a rose—a red rose—a Rose of San José."

He looked at the withered, faded little flower. Only he understood that its meaning was a sad heart as well.

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